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F.C.KOLBE, D.D.
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MAY 22 1963

THE ART OF LIFE

AN ESSAY



BY

FREDERICK CHARLES KOLBE, D.D.,

OF ST. MARY'S, CAPETOWN.

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*Homines divites in virtute, pulchritudinis studium
habentes.—ECCLI. XLIV., 6.*

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author's immediate ecclesiastical superior.

✠ JOHN LEONARD.
Vicar Apostolic of Western Cape Colony.

30th June, 1902.

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THE ART OF LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

THE RELATION OF THE ART OF LIFE TO ALL THE OTHER ARTS.

Via Sapientiae, via pulchrae.—Prov. iii, 17.

ALL the great pre-Christian philosophers, especially those of Greece, regarded life as an art, and moral science only as the theory of that art. The practical philosophy of the Church has carried on the tradition, and the whole of her marvellous literature of ascetical and mystical theology is simply a body of instruction for learners in the art. These learners may not—certainly need not—look at it in this light ; it may even be often better for them not to be conscious of their art ; but, to those who reflect and theorise, the artistic point of view is a deeply interesting one, and even the ordinary plodder may find new motives and unexpected beauty in what he is at first inclined to consider an excessive idealism. About this art, J. S. Mill in his “System of Logic,” calling it expressly “the Art of Life,” makes some pregnant remarks, but adds the curious complaint that “in the main it is unfortunately still to be created.”

B

This Art, which he thus ignorantly worships, do we declare unto him.

All will agree that the main result of Art is the production of Beauty. Our conception of Beauty, therefore, must make a very great **spiritual beauty**, difference to our estimate of Art. It should be intellectual, not sensuous. The average idea of the beautiful is, I fear, somewhat too feminine in character, and a great deal too restricted in range. Beauty which appeals chiefly to the senses, and which varies with the fashions of men, is not the theme of Catholic philosophy, nor has it ever been the main object of Catholic art. Ordinary language presents "the beautiful" as a mere accessory of things, a desirable adornment, but not by any means to rank with their essence or solid value. Many deny that there is such a thing as a real objective beauty at all, declaring that it is all a matter of time and place and person. It is, they say, simply a question of taste, and *de gustibus non est disputandum*. To my mind this variability of taste proves just the contrary: it is the universality of beauty in things that is shown, and not the non-existence, if men can find it everywhere. Men's views of truth, and ways of seeking goodness, have also varied, but we never doubt the existence of real truth and goodness behind.

In reality these three are exactly parallel—the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. They characterise all God's works and are the mirrored reflection of the three-fold Personality of the one Creator. Nothing that God has made is either evil or false or hideous, and nothing exists in the world but what God has

is one of the ways to God.

made. It is a cardinal point in Catholic philosophy that there is no such thing as essential evil—evil being nothing but a defect in things that are essentially good. Exactly the same must be said of the true and the beautiful. They are the three ways to the one God. Some prove God by the evidence of truth : some feel their way to Him through the goodness pervading the universe : for my part, I find I have always inferred my idea of Him through the avenue of the beautiful.

Thus, then, there is beauty in everything, and our perception of it is limited only by our capacity. A speck of dust would be as unpromising an illustration as I could find: but put it under a microscope and flood it with light, and you shall find in it more than the loveliness of a landscape. The true artist has his light and his microscope in his own mind, and his function in the world is to make visible to others the beauty, he alone has seen. And side by side with the producers of beauty, as the world's benefactors, are the men who enable us to see old beauty in a new light, such as Ruskin in the natural order, and St. Augustine in the supernatural : this, indeed, is the true function of criticism, and its only excuse for talking in the realm of Art. As all the beauty of Art must have been borrowed from that of Nature, we see the truth of Ruskin's saying—"Whatever is great in human Art is the expression of man's delight in God's work."

Now Art, which we may at once describe as the appropriate language of beauty, has its impulse, not from below but from above—not from the regions of sense-perception which the Greeks called *Aesthesia*, but from that

of intellectual contemplation which they called Theoria. Hence the birth of new ideas in the world's history has always been signalised by the efflorescence of Art. Every great religion has blossomed once, and Christianity has shown its supreme vitality by blooming periodically and in some respects perennially. Each period of prolific Art-flowering has been a determined attempt on the part of mankind to reach the full expression of some new view of absolute Goodness, Truth and Beauty. Of course there is failure, for man can never reach the absolute, and therefore each such period is followed by a reaction of doubt and indifference, until the magic touch comes once again.

This consideration necessarily establishes Beauty in the unchanging spiritual world, whence also Truth and Goodness shine into our minds.
is subject to the laws of beauty. It follows that, amid all the variety of form under which we recognise it, there must be certain invariable qualities which are its own, and which (whatever we may fancy) are the true causes of its influence upon us. These qualities are necessitated, not by the essence of Beauty itself, but by the imperfect conditions under which it has to manifest itself. Like light, it is not visible while speeding on its way, but only where it is broken. In Nature, then, Beauty reveals itself in such qualities as proportion and harmony, unity in variety, law and order, fitness and utility. It is, as Plato calls it, *splendor veri*, the spontaneous radiance of reality. In Art, where the source of Beauty is limited as well as its expression, the restrictions are more exacting. In order not to sin against itself

by either excess or defect, it must have at least the four following qualities :—

(1) It must be obedient to principle. Amid all the wild forces of Nature we know there is a law, whether we see it or not ; but in the productions of man, who is on our own level, we claim to see the law. Every Art, therefore, has its definite principles, and, as Coventry Patmore puts it, saying with easy grace what we always wanted to say ourselves :

“They live by law, not like the fool,
But like the bard who freely sings
In strictest bonds of rhyme and rule,
And finds in them not bonds but wings.”

(2) It must be self-restrained — rejecting even ornament when it is superfluous. This is what the Greeks meant by *Meden agan* (no going beyond limits), and the Latins by *elegantia*. The language of Dante and the ornaments of Early English Gothic illustrate the meaning.

(3) It must be simple—otherwise it will meet the fate of “vaulting ambition.” I may be told that a sonata of Beethoven is exceedingly complex. I am not musician enough to be dogmatic, but I do believe that even here the complexity is merely the multiform expression of one idea, and the beauty of the sonata is most manifest to him who can comprehend that idea in its simplest form.

(4) It must be suggestive of the ideal. This is done (*a*) positively, (*b*) negatively, and (*c*) by convention. Thus, in the Heaven of Fra Angelico, we have grace and spirituality shown positively by expression of face and attitude, negatively by drapery, conventionally by the haloes and the harps of gold. All strong

emotion radiates this idealising quality naturally. Thus, grief suffuses the whole world with its object—as we read in the *In Memoriam* :

“Thy voice is on the rolling air ;
I hear thee where the waters run ;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.”

All these qualities will be abundantly illustrated in the course of our argument.

One more remark I have to make about the parallelism and essential oneness of Goodness, Truth and Beauty. It is that by a fundamental paradox common to the three, the best way of attaining to any one of them is not to aim directly at it, but at the others. Thus, Truth is never more completely attained than by those who have aimed at the perfection of Goodness. So also, whether in Art or elsewhere, the highest Beauty is the result of the most faithful expression of Truth and Goodness. And, indeed, we may summarise the whole argument by saying that the happiness of life depends on our perception of the beautiful, and our perception of the beautiful depends on our participation in the good and true.

We may now proceed to the classifying of the Arts. We have seen that the aim of Art is the **Every energy has** faithful expression of Goodness and **its corresponding** Truth, and its end is the production **art,—** of Beauty. We have seen also that beauty is not a mere luxury to man : it is a necessity. He cannot help loving it. He sends out his heart for it in all directions. In beauty all his needs are clothed, and every act of his creative power is nothing but a conscious or unconscious striving after it. Therefore

every energy of man results in Art, ~~and~~ the highest energy in the highest Art.

Let me prove this by induction. Beginning with the lowest, man has the sense of taste and the need of food: therefore out of barbaric simplicity there gradually arises ^{the lower senses} with civilisation the perfection of agriculture and of culinary art. He has also the sense of smell, and therefore, stretching out his selective power over Nature, he creates the art of perfumery. True, these are the least intellective of his senses, and therefore these are the lowest of the arts. Still they are arts, and God forbid that we should despise any art in its own legitimate sphere. Nor are they excluded from the service of the sanctuary; for the one prepares the materials for the Sacraments of God, and the other contributes its incense as the sweet symbol of Prayer. At any rate, I point them out to show how universal is the dominion of beauty over the powers of man, and how completely the service of God recognises the dominion.

The expenditure of muscular energy is a kind of creative power: therefore man insists on doing it with elegance and with the beauty ^{Physical strength,} of strength, and there results the Athletic Arts. We no longer, except in Spain, dance as David did before the Ark; but much of our ritual is a dignified and symbolic exercise of this energy.

Again, partly to protect and partly to idealise himself, man has to dress. He will, therefore, clothe himself in beauty. I fear I am provoking a ^{Dress,} smile. I mean, however, not merely what we may call the art of millinery, but such art also as culminates in coronation robes, or such as makes

garments the outward expression of truth, virtue, principle—such in fact as is called in Holy Scripture “a spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron’s vestments for glory and for beauty.” The Philosophy of Clothes did not begin with Sartor Resartus: the Catholic Church has taught one of her own to all generations.

Man has to dwell in houses. Therefore Architecture springs into being. From the log-hut was evolved the

Building, colonnade and architrave and pediment of the Parthenon; and from the

leafy bower, the arch and pinnacle and spire and living doorway of Notre Dame. Every Christian Cathedral, aye, and every Pagan temple according to its light, is a permanent hymn to the Maker of the world.

Man has to communicate with others by symbols. So he beautifies the symbols ; and in Painting, the

Writing and hieroglyphs of Egypt commence
carving, a series which reaches its highest
point in the Madonna of Dresden ; while in Sculpture,
the whittled stick-token perhaps of hospitality is
developed into the Apollo Belvidere.

He has to hear and utter sounds; and thus is born the almost spiritual art of Music, the chosen

**Singing,
Speaking,
Thinking,** type to us of the language of Heaven. He has to speak, and therefore decks his words with the glories of Eloquence and Poetry.

Rising higher in the scale, he has to think; and behold a chaste and beauteous form—mistaken in days of old for a goddess—the form of Philosophic Truth.

" How charming is Divine Philosophy,
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose."

The *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas is as truly a work of art as the Cathedral of Durham or the Divine Comedy of Dante.

Then, last and best of all, man is free; he can love, and he has to act. And this creative power puts into his hands, as the greatest of God's gifts, the Art of Life. The Life of St. Francis of Assisi was even more a work of art than the *Summa* of St. Thomas.

Now I do not intend to be merely putting forth an analogy in thus classing all the Arts together: I desire to be understood in all literalness. To use words which belong to English Literature rather than to Catholic Philosophy, the *Aesthetic* Sense, and the *Illative* Sense, and the *Moral* Sense, are at the bottom one and the same. Some people, not liking this analogical use of the word Sense, would rather I spoke of Faculties. When the soul apprehends a thing as true, or as good, or as beautiful, it is said to do so by a faculty. The division does not lie in the soul, but in the objects of the soul's action. For the soul of man, though complex in manifestation, is simple in being. Therefore the energies of the soul have no real dividing line between them. And, therefore, there is a real family bond between all the Arts which the soul's various Senses or Faculties produce.

About this the philosophic historian might have something to say, with regard, for example, to the simultaneous efflorescence of all these Arts in Greece—again in the Middle Ages—again in the Renaissance. But into this I will not enter: I merely point out the phenomenon as food for thought.

If now the Arts are all grouped into a single family, we ought to be able to find some description common to them all; and if common to all they are studied under this description of them, each should be able to throw light on all the rest. By careful comparison of common qualities, then, we may say that, in every Art, man, (1) by some power or energy, (2) working under the guidance of a special sense or genius, (3) with definite means, (4) moulds, (5) some given material (6) into beautiful form.

Thus, a sculptor (1) by the power of his hand, (2) working under the guidance of his mental grasp of bodily form, does (3) with hammer and chisel (4) shape (5) a block of marble (6) into some permanent type of beauty.

Or, a thinker, (1) by the energy of his mind, (2) under the guidance of its intuitive and reasoning powers, does (3) by the medium of philosophic language (4) develop (5) vague consciousness of phenomena (6) into symmetrical and harmonious beauty of system.

The aim of this series of articles, then, is to describe (1) the energy, (2) the genius, (3) the means, (4) the transforming touch, (5) the material, and (6) the form, of the Art of Life. They will not be taken in this order, but in due succession they will all be treated in turn.

I would observe before proceeding, that, in the list of Arts given above the last two (those of Thought

**Those of thought
and of Life, the
highest because
spiritual,**

and of Life) are on a higher plane than the others. They belong to the region of the spirit, whereas all the others are concerned mainly with material form. This has led many to forget that Thinking and Living are really

arts at all. But the Greeks (after Socrates at least) never forgot it, and if I loved them for nothing else it would be for this, that they always made much of the lofty pleasures of Thought, and of the beauty attainable in Action, linking in indissoluble union the two words *kalos* and *agathos*. In this, all the Church's best philosophers have been disciples of the Greeks.

Further, these two arts have another pre-eminence, about which the old Greeks knew little or nothing. It is that in them we first begin to be conscious of Divine influence. Of course God's hand is over all things, whether spiritual or not, and all beauty is but a faint reflection of His; but it is for spiritual beauty that He reserves the special intimacy of His manifested influence. The Truth of God is in and over all our thoughts, and the Grace of God is in and over all our actions. Thought, therefore, is the art of Truth, and Life is the art of Grace. The Word has dwelt among us full of this Grace and Truth, and of His fulness we have all received.

Even of these two, and therefore of the whole family of sister arts, that of Life is the eldest and the most lovely. To a large extent it includes the other, and inspires all the rest. Nevertheless it ranks with them all, and therefore, in analogy with the general description of Art given above, I define it as the Arts wherein man, (1) by the power of Grace, (2) working through the Moral Sense illuminated by Faith, does, (3) with the instrumentality chiefly of Prayer, (4)

The Art of Life
defined.

transform (5) the nature of the Soul (6) into the Divine Beauty of Justice.

The following chapters are intended to be a proof and an unfolding of this conception of the Art.

CHAPTER II.

THE MATERIAL OF THE ART.—THE SOUL.

*Factus est primus homo Adam in animam viventem,
novissimus Adam in spiritum vivificantem.—I Cor.
XV. 45.*

EVERY Art has some material proper to it, upon which it works, and in which it expresses its own form of beauty. This material itself, unformed, is as a rule, worthless, at least comparatively to what it afterwards becomes. The block of stone unshaped by the sculptor is broken into dust, or lies neglected on the mountain side. Now the Art of Life has for its material the Soul of man, which, informed by the beauty of virtue, remains a thing of beauty for ever, but if not so informed is only fit to be cast out into oblivion.

The material of
our Art

In some ascetic works, I have seen limits put to this definition of the material of the Art. One writer says that the *objectum materiae* of what he calls the Science Neither less of the Saints or the Art of Holiness is "every power of the soul, *as far as it is subject to the will.*" I do not like to limit it even in words: yet still less do I like to seem to differ from an acknowledged authority in doctrine. There is a shrewd distinction of Aristotle's which shows that in the long run the two definitions come to the same thing. He says that those powers of the soul which are not subject to the will "despotically" are subject to it "politically;" in more modern phrase, the government of the soul by the will is sometimes autocratic, sometimes constitutional. If I want to move my hand or think out a problem, a mandate of the will suffices; but if I want to suppress the first movements of an involuntary terror, or get rid of a teasing temptation, I have to summon the various powers of my soul, as it were, to a parliament, and so gradually reduce myself to a reasoned subjection. Since there are really no limits to this constitutional government of the will, it becomes evident that the apparent difference between the two definitions vanishes.

On the other hand some might want to extend the definition and say that the material of the Art of Life is not only the Soul nor more but the Body as well—for we must be holy in body as well as in spirit. These, however, also mean the same thing with me, if they hold the true view of the union between the body and the soul, as I shall show hereafter. I may, therefore, lay it down, as

practically agreed upon, that the material to be formed by our Art is the Soul.

Here, then, appears another pre-eminence of our Art. The material of all the other arts is external to our than the soul. selves, and perishable: in this, it is our very self, and immortal. Even in the spiritual Art of Thinking, though Truth itself is eternal, yet our present form of knowledge with all its systems will be swept away with our present conditions of being

“ Only a sweet and virtuous Soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives ;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.”

Now in every Art it is very necessary to study the material with which we have to work. The sculptor

Hence the need must know not only the general of studying our qualities of the stone on which he soul works, but must take account of the particular veins in the particular block of marble before him. The painter must know the reactions of colours one on another, must find out whether they will fade, must know not only how they look when he lays them on, but how they will look after they have settled, or how change of light will affect them. Some great painters have made the study of their materials scientific and practical ; others have been contented with traditional and empirical knowledge : but knowledge of some kind they must have. Therefore also in this our Art a knowledge of the human Soul in general, and of our own in particular, is absolutely necessary. Of this knowledge, much is traditional, much empirical, much scientific, much intuitive, and a good deal is left to

our own experiment ; but one way or another get it we must. "Know thyself" has been a first principle of the Art from its earliest conscious days.

It is well, moreover, to have this self-knowledge in all its completeness, from our physiological side, as well as from our psychological : from its lower side as well as its higher.

otherwise we are liable to much error. Thus, people sometimes fancy some disorder of theirs has a spiritual cause, when it may be only medicine, or rest, they need. A typical example of this is explained by one of George Eliot's keen observations—all the more useful to us because she was not thinking of religion at all—namely, that a violent emotion is always likely to be followed by a dreamy disbelief in the reality of its cause. When after a season of special devotion we are unaccountably tormented by temptations against faith, it will spare us a good deal of worry if we recognise that our body is only undergoing a customary reaction. Many a mistake, again, is made, especially by beginners, in over-taxing one's physical powers. These things should all be a matter for study. We should not allow the limitations of the lower energies of our souls to be discovered by bitter experience when too late ; nor, on the other hand, should we allow the serenity of our higher energies to be disturbed by passing storms below.

For complete knowledge of our Soul, then, we must be bold enough to be prepared to investigate, upwards, downwards and inwards, three kinds of mystery—the mystery This study is three-fold of the union and interaction of body and soul, the mystery of the soul's conscious

life of thought, and the mystery of its adaptability to the supernatural ; or in other words, (1) the soul's life below consciousness, (2) within the range of consciousness, and (3) above consciousness. In sketching the limits of this investigation I will try not to weary my readers, but every art-study must have a little technical language about it and at least a little real thought. So I will set about it systematically, leaving unphilosophical readers, if they will, to skip as much as they like, nevertheless reminding them that it sometimes does the mind good to bathe it in truths that are not wholly intelligible to us.

I.—UNION OF BODY AND SOUL, OR THE SOUL'S SUB-CONSCIOUS LIFE.

To have a true view of this mysterious union is of the last importance, and yet there is nothing

(1) **The soul's life below consciousness.** that has become so befogged in the minds of men. The world seems to be drifting into a semi-conscious materialism, even Christian thinkers making concessions which, if logically thought out, cut us off not merely from our directly divine origin, but also from a future demonstrably immortal. Physical science is so absorbing the imagination that the soul is now-a-days regarded rather as an adjunct of the body, than the body of the soul.

For the Catholic there is no need of such fogginess, nor any excuse for it. There is a view, thought

The Church's view out by the Greeks of old at least in its main outlines, adopted as satisfactory by the severe logic of the Catholic schools, proclaimed as a revealed truth (so at

least it appears to some of us, though we may not insist upon it dogmatically) by a Council of the Church, and seemingly emphasised as of urgent importance by the Church authorities of our own day. I am sure it is the most beautiful view—the unerring instinct of the Greeks would not let them miss that. I cannot think otherwise than that it is philosophically sound, seeing that it has passed unharmed through the fire of centuries of discussion in the schools. It seems to me that it is part of the teaching of our Divine Master, otherwise no Council would proclaim it ; and if so, it inspires me with grateful gladness and overwhelming certitude. And lastly the stress laid upon it by the Church in these our days breeds in me a conviction that it is of high importance to the Art of Life, otherwise she would not emphasise it.

Let me add to these great reasons, that the little thought I have been able to bestow on these subjects would lead me, even independently of authority, to choose this view. My course of philosophy in Rome was made distasteful to me, largely (as I afterwards recognised) because my teacher put before me a view which I could not for the life of me discriminate from the fogginess out of which I had come. To fail of promised enlightenment is disappointment indeed. When during my theology course that professor was removed from his position for that very reason, I could not help a gleam of satisfaction that what had been so painful to me did not find favour with the Church's chief authority. This set my thought back to the problem, and I found in the doctrine of the

*has been only
defined sufficiently
for the doctrine of
the Incarnation.*

Incarnation the view which I had vainly groped for in the philosophical schools. To me this view explains the phenomena of life as no other does, and moreover it seems to me to be instinct with a spiritual beauty that could never vivify a falsehood.

I do not want to be dogmatic. There are some theologians who do not like the view, at least in its full

We may have extent ; who say that the Council slight differences of Vienna and even Leo XIII. can on it, be differently interpreted ; who have even, by a marvellous feat of intellectual gymnastics, jumped to the conclusion that is not taught by St. Thomas Aquinas. Let us differ in peace, but meanwhile let every man speak according to his light.

There are other views on the union of Body and Soul, but having no space for discussion I am going to pass them all by—the engine-driver theory of Descartes, the accidental-miraculous theory of Malebranche, the simultaneous-clocks theory of Leibnitz, and all. Not in any spirit of mockery do I pass them by using such epithets—I would not stultify myself by jeering at any man of genius, any master of any art, in his own sphere, however wrong or eccentric he might appear to me—but I wanted to show in one single word why I think these theories destroy the unity of subject necessary for our art.

The theory, then, is somewhat as follows. This body of ours is not a separate thing, different from the soul. We deny that it has any organic life of its own which a superadded soul comes in by some mysterious influence to control and direct. Sensation

The soul is the form of the body.

is not a gathering by the soul of impressions on particles united to but external to itself. The body has not even a being it can call its own ; whatever the body is, the soul makes it. The moving of the limbs, the circulation of the blood, the renovation of tissue, the digestion of food, are all as much the work of the soul as are sensation and thought. I am one being, not two. My soul is simple in its essence, as well as various in its powers ; and it is one and the same thing which thinks beyond the body's range, which in the body feels, which organises the body itself, and which constitutes (or gives being to) the very minutest particle of which that body is composed. All this is included in the meaning of the statement that "the soul is the *form* of the body."

Is the body then the soul ? or part of the soul ? And am I going to turn out a materialist after all ? No, God forbid. How then shall I explain it ? What *is* matter ? There is an impalpable unimaginable "something," which has no separate existence except in mental analysis, and yet out of it the whole material universe springs, because it has the power, or rather capacity, of serving as a vehicle for an indefinite variety of forms. This "something" is not matter as we know it, in the concrete, but lies behind and is called "matter in the previous stage," the matter we are familiar with being made known to us only by the myriad forms embodied therein. We can no more perceive matter without form than we can think outside of all relation to space and time. Our sense-knowledge is entirely phenomenal, and there is no possibility for us to know things

The almost-nothing-ness of matter, and the everything-ness of the form.

as they really are. Now we should require to know things as they really are, in order to be able to imagine to ourselves this *materia prima*. But the intellect is not limited by the imagination, and by our intellect we analyse material things into (1) forces (whose combinations are called forms) which make them perceptible and (2) the imperceptible matter in which those forces, or forms, reside.

Now some forms are merely material, *i.e.*, they have no other function than to introduce this imperceptible matter into the concrete world. Such are the forms of air, of stone, of plants, and also of the lower animals. The forces of nature called them into being and will again dissipate them into their original nothingness. They rise in a beautiful and incalculable series of gradations, from the lowest elements which man has not yet been able to decompose to the highest and most complex results of the evolution of animal life.

Gradation of forms, material and spiritual. Other forms are more than material, *i.e.*, besides introducing this imperceptible matter into the concrete world in an exceedingly complex manner, they have other functions which, being above all matter, we call spiritual. These are the souls of men. They are classed with other souls (*i.e.*, the souls of plants and of animals) because they give life as well as being to matter: but they are classed above other souls because they do higher work as well. The fact that they transcend matter, shows that they were not evolved out of matter, and consequently every human soul is known to owe its existence to a direct creative act. And since death

is merely the cessation of a particular mode of animation of some particular matter, we know that death cannot affect the superior substance of the soul—in other words, that the soul is immortal.

What I want to say, then, is that when God creates a human soul, He endows it not only with its spiritual powers, making it a little lower than the Angels, but also with the powers of all the lower material forms.

The position of the soul in the universe.

This was what they meant of old by calling the soul a *microcosm*, an epitome of the whole universe. It is my soul, therefore, which is indeed spiritual, but also gives my body its very being. Displacing other forms, it calls forth matter from its previous stage and places it in the concrete world. There is no form, or force, or uniting substance, or anything, between my immortal soul and the primary material which it informs.

It thus becomes evident why I say that the Soul alone is the working-material of the Art of Life. Man is equal to Soul *plus* *materia prima* : and for the purposes of the Art, *materia prima* is equal to zero.

Simple as this view is, when once you see it, it is by no means easy to grasp it in any living way. I have known men who could discuss it learnedly and defend it successfully without being in the least degree influenced by it in their views of the spiritual life. To me it came in an intuitive flash while I was reading St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians with my mind wrought to a white heat in the theological forge. I do not for a moment advance it as an argument, but I saw clearly that this doctrine is

the material analogue of that spiritual "mystery" of which St. Paul speaks so much, whereby in a marvellous transformation (literally a changing of "form") each individual has his identity merged into that of Christ and so becomes part of the Mystical Body, that Body itself being nothing in itself and the Spirit of Christ being all in all. This then, it seemed to me, must have been the view which called forth the enthusiastic surprise of St. Augustine, thitherto unintelligible to me : he was not one to go beyond the bounds of gladness for a mere philosophical theory. I was not sure at first if I understood it aright ; but casting my eyes over the scheme of things, I said to myself, " If St. Thomas means by it what I think he means, then I know exactly how he will explain the doctrine of the resurrection of the body." It was my *experimentum crucis*. With eager hands I turned over the pages of the *Summa*, and there, expressed indeed in the clear, crisp, unapproachable language of the Master Thinker, but unmistakably the same, stood the thoughts to which the new view had given birth in my mind. I have thanked God for it ever since, as St. Augustine did.

Yes, this view explains, as far as one mystery can explain another, three things most important to
and the rest of Catholic doctrine, covering the life
the Church's of the human race from end to end :
teaching. and how any other view throws
light on them I have never been able to see. I
mean (1) the privileges of the body in the state
of innocence, partially renewed to some of the
Saints, (2) the effects of original sin and the consequent
need of mortification which is normal to our state of

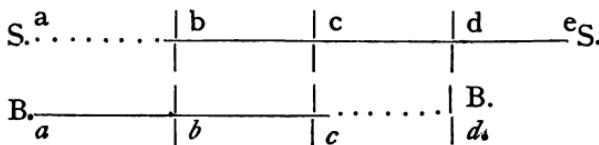
probation under sin, and (3) the glories of our future resurrection. These points, though they tempt me to expatiate, I leave as food for thought.

II.—THE SOUL'S CONSCIOUS LIFE.

Of the three regions in our soul, this second is the most necessary to be explored. All three are important: that of union with the body, because in it arise most of the difficulties of our Art; this of consciousness because it is the seat of our control over the operations of the Art; that which transcends consciousness, because in it are expressed the main results of those operations. But command over the second is the most important to us now, because only give us the operations, and difficulties and results may be largely left to take care of themselves. Good, steady, well-directed work will overcome most difficulties, whether they are fully realised or not, and will produce good results, whether we are fully conscious of them or not. Good, steady work, therefore, and how to produce and direct it, must be the main object of our care: and this is, for the present, almost all within the domain of consciousness.

A very simple diagram will show the relations of soul and body with regard to consciousness, and therefore the limit between this set of mysteries and the previous one.

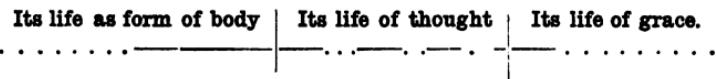
(2) The soul's life
within conscious-
ness. The reasons
of its importance.



The line SS represents the stages of the soul ; and the line BB, those of the body as we know it objectively. In these *ab* represents the lower, or vegetative, powers of the soul, corresponding to *ab*, the lower functions of the body ; the line *ab* being dotted to show that the soul does not exercise these powers consciously. Then in bc and *bc* we have the soul in the conscious, but still only animal, stage of sensation, with the parallel action as known to us of the bodily senses. In cd we have the soul preparing materials for thought, through the medium of certain bodily actions (*cd*) which we cannot in the present stage of science trace, chiefly belonging to the brain. And lastly in de the soul altogether transcends the material world, and thinks.

Or perhaps, if I may anticipate for a moment what
 And by anticipa- I am to say about the region above
 tion of (1), (2) and (3). consciousness, the soul's whole life
 may be thus represented in a single line :—

THE SOUL.



Here, where the line is continuous, it represents consciousness : where it is dotted, it represents the absence of consciousness. The diagram, therefore, shows that the life of sense is partly below the threshold of consciousness, afterwards conscious : the life of thought is partly explicit, partly implicit : and the life of grace is conscious only in its earliest stages.

Now in the next life, I believe that *this line will cease to be dotted*: consciousness will extend throughout the whole range. And the important fact for us now is that we can begin to tend in our present life towards this final result. Consciousness can enlarge its reach both upwards and downwards and inwards, and for the purposes of our Art it is necessary that it should. Besides turning much of our implicit thought into explicit (by training the mind and the will), we can get a greater command over our body, and we can learn to see further into the things of grace. As an example of the one, I would point to the almost "despotic" control which St. Ignatius acquired over those external signs of anger which in ordinary men are ruled only "politically," and then with difficulty. And as an example of the other, we are told that St. Teresa found by her own interior experience, in spite of the contrary teaching of her confessor, the truth taught by St. Thomas of a special presence of God in the soul beyond His indwelling by sanctifying grace. Hence, also, because of their wider and deeper range of consciousness, Saints not only see moral beauties invisible to others, but also find temptation and sin where other men do not. And among the many proofs of the marvellous insight into moral truth possessed by the great Sage whom we generally call Buddha, this is not the least—that he deliberately aimed at such an extension of the sphere of consciousness, even over the body. It was for this end that he taught his disciples "to do with full presence of mind whatever they did," and he used to instance even such details as the act of breathing.

Men have laughed at him for it ; the idea, they say, of wasting time in fixing one's attention on breathing ! But Buddha, though we shall see where and why he failed, yet even in his failure understood more than his critics : his aim was true, though his means may have been insufficient.

Our brief survey, then, shows us that by moral training we may acquire a more perfect command over the body, and so preclude a great deal of temptation, besides being better able to measure our available store of energy ; that by meditation and attention we may turn a great deal of the mind's unconscious drift into explicit channels, and so increase the regulative power of reason ; and that by practice we may develop within ourselves a faculty of intuition for the things of grace, which will be found to surpass all other knowledge. "The soul of a holy man discovereth sometimes true things, more than seven watchmen that sit in a high place to watch."

III.—THE SOUL'S SUPER-CONSCIOUS LIFE.

This third kind of mystery rises from the fact that the soul is not centred or bounded in itself, but finds

(3) **The soul's life above consciousness—indicated by the inchoateness of its nature.**

its full development only in a higher sphere, towards which all its energies have to be directed. By itself, the soul is a very incomplete sort of thing—as indeed is implied in its

being only the raw material for an Art. It has been constructed for the very purpose of being dovetailed

into the supernatural ; or, if this metaphor seems rather wooden, let me say with St. Paul that it requires to have a higher growth grafted on it, to nourish which all the sap of its lower powers, transformed by a principle above itself, has to be lifted up. What this higher life is, will be better considered later on, when we come to speak of the beauty into which our soul has to be formed. What we must bear in mind now is that this higher life of the soul (that part of its "conversation which is in heaven") is none the less real because it is above our consciousness. One of the most foolish mistakes we make is to expect to have full knowledge of our supernatural status—as if a life that is "hid with Christ in God" can be explored by the bat-eyed intelligence of this twilight world. But enough of this mystery for the present, since so much is to be said of it hereafter. Meanwhile I will only say that it is in this upward direction, and in this alone, that the soul is unbounded in its growth : in every other, it is "cabin'd, cribb'd, confined," and any attempt to force its limits can result in nothing but distortion.

And now that we have glanced at the material of our Art in all its length and breadth, we may infer that we should not measure the soul's powers by what the body can do, nor by our present stage of consciousness. In our mother's womb we knew nothing at all, but we were immortal souls nevertheless. Therefore, while we use every endeavour to make the range of consciousness and control wider and deeper, we must ever remember that the soul itself still lives and works beyond, both above and below.

*The fulness of
our range,*

Even during sleep it keeps up its operations in vivifying the body. Though we heed it not, it is busy in the world of matter : is it doing **not limited even by sleep.** nothing in the world of grace ? "I sleep but my heart waketh," may have its meaning here. I believe that our soul goes on working for a while with the propulsion it has acquired. What else is meant by a "virtual" intention during our waking hours ? And with regard to sleep, those people who are truly pious and dedicate their energies to God when they lie down, find those energies so ready to continue the work when they wake, that I quite believe their soul never ceased working at all, but that their very sleep was even literally spent in God's service.

It will not do, moreover, to have narrow views of the soul. Even were we to measure it by the mere range of its consciousness, the whole **Our resultant wideness of view,** of the material universe of God could not afford a calculus subtle enough or expansive enough for our purpose. What then when this is only a fraction ? Lift up your eyes to the firmament and realise for an instant that all the power and glory there displayed is inferior to the power and glory within your own soul, even in the natural order, and you will see at once that you were born for a noble life of faith in the region of the spirit, and not for a grovelling life of sense and sight, immersed in matter. The man who puts a low value on his own soul is surely very ungrateful to the God who gave him his being. To such a one I would cry with St. Augustine, *Extende fines charitatis tuæ—* not indeed *per orbem terrarum*, but through the

length and breadth and depth and height of your true spiritual life.

Therefore, when we use metaphors to describe the soul, since use them we must, let them be large and noble. For this reason I like that analogy of George Eliot's—"There is a great deal of unmapped country within us which has to be taken account of in any explanation of our gusts and storms." There is a sense of fresh air about that. It makes us feel ashamed of any pettiness or narrowness in our moral life.

Here, again, is a way in which I picture the 'soul to myself. It is a kingdom, the dominion over which is in the hands of him who holds the citadel of it : if grace holds it, then "the kingdom of God is within you :" but even then, in the regions round about there may be many a rebellious host yet unsubdued, the lusts of the flesh which war against the spirit ; and the great work of life is first to establish grace in the stronghold and then by its means to undertake the gradual and laborious task of reducing all the warring passions to subjection.

Or I might take an even wider view, and say that there is room in my soul for a reproduction in miniature of the whole history of the race, just as one spray of fern is a repetition of the whole plant. I see in it an original Eden of baptismal innocence wantonly laid in ruins : I see a conscience-stricken Mount Sinai terrifying a small portion of me by a view of the wrath of the Law of God : I see a wilderness within me, and I hear a voice crying in it "Prepare the way of the Lord" : I see a

Holy Land within me, every village of which speaks loud of Him who went about doing good : and there are dark times in my history wherein I see a hill of Calvary red with the blood of One crucified afresh and put to an open shame : I have dim thoughts, too, that after that I see an upper chamber, and hear the rushing of a mighty wind, and tongues of fire descend and their sound goes forth into all the land ; and I know that this little universe of mine also awaits its purification by fire and its final restoration to beauty.

Or if our analogy be not on a large scale, let it at least be noble. Thus I may consider my soul as a ray of light flashed from the Sun of or scientific.

Justice, bearing wherever it shines an image of that Sun—like the ray, undivided in its action, yet having a triple force in the heat, light and actinism of the Memory, the Understanding and the Will—like the ray again, when considered as refracted through the denser medium of sense-commencing knowledge, broken up into a spectrum of various qualities and powers, amid which the Will attains its maximum here, and the Understanding there, and each may be made to act apart—in all this like the Light of light, who is undivided in Nature, triple in Personality, and refracted into variety of attribute in the feeble minds of His creatures.

What then is the upshot of it all ? It is that the Soul must be regarded as a mighty assemblage of

All the soul's energies, and that the whole object energies must of life is the guiding of these energies converge into one aright. Upon their harmonious resultant, working together depends the well-being of the soul, and upon the direction of their

resultant depends its eternal destiny. For the soul being indivisible, the attempted division of its forces is unnatural and therefore distorting, while the soul itself after all must necessarily go whither the main bent of its energies leads it. If our energies are mainly spent amid the multiplicity of the world beneath us and around us (all that is material being beneath us, and all human souls being our equals), what results? While the body is at its ease, in comfort, in luxury, in idleness, in sensuality, in the gratification of its passions, what about the spiritual powers? What has become of the calm peace of Memory, riding like the angel on the whirlwind of the elements below? What of the soaring aspirations of the Intellect? What of the unswerving persistence of the Will? When man expends his whole energies on that side of himself which is the sport of inferior circumstances, it must be by distorting his better self, so that to yield to the guidance of his bodily powers, by accommodating himself to the material world, necessarily ends in failure and pain, or, in the language of Art, discord and ugliness. There may be satisfaction below, but there is pain above: and as it is the upper part of the soul that always prevails in the long run, the satisfaction must sooner or later be swallowed up in the pain.

Whereas if our energies are devoted to the world above consciousness, the whole soul receives an upward tendency. The Memory now finds *which must be directed upwards*, its rest in the calm of the Unchangeable, and the Intellect full scope in the radiance of the Infinite, and the Will fresh vigour in the freedom of the Omnipotent,—and the spirit is at home. And the

lower powers? True, it is a strain for them, and has been a strain ever since the first sin took away full harmony from the soul of man; and therefore to them the attempt to lead the spiritual life necessarily begins in pain. But what would we have,—other choice we have none—pleasure below with pain above to end in pain alone, or pain below with joy above to end in joy alone? For we must remember that in both cases it is the “above” that prevails, and since the soul cannot die, such prevailing must be permanent and everlasting, for better or for worse.

What life does not this view put into the words of St. Paul, “*Mortify your members which are on earth!*”

rejecting every-
thing incon-
sistent with this
aim.

The soul has members which are above the earth, and these do not need to be mortified. It is not surprising, then, that all the great

masters of the Art of Morality, both within and without the true religion, have been unanimous in this, that the soul cannot be shaped to any form of beauty without the process of mortification of the flesh,—a mortification which means (as all mortification in every Art does mean) not merely the cutting off of excrescences and the constraining of tendencies, but also the deliberate rejection of every thing, however beautiful in itself, which does not fit in with the ultimate design.

It is this ultimate design we must have in view. We are in fact daily preparing, not only our souls, but

In this aim the body shares as well, our very bodies for the Resurrection, even before we die. It is not, we must remember, in accordance with our theory, that God will re-create our body into beautiful form, and then unite it as a separate thing

to our soul, but God will give our soul the power to be reunited to the old *materia prima*, and it is the soul, such as in this our probation we shall have formed it by God's grace, that will itself form the body hereafter. While therefore we may daily experience sin in the body sullying and materialising the soul, so we may by God's grace (if we will) daily experience sanctity in the soul preparing the body for being sublimed into spirituality.

It may be that in this lifting up of the very lowest powers of the soul into the region of the spirit and of grace, we shall find a partial explanation of such 'abnormal' states (so we call them) as ecstasy, the impression of the stigmata, the raising of the body in the air, and so forth, which we read of in the lives of the Saints. And by saying this I do not mean to lessen the miracle; rather I magnify it by assigning it to a higher sphere.

Moreover, I would ask theologians whether this has not something to do with the double effect they ascribe to Holy Communion, namely, that it diminishes concupiscence, and also prepares the body for its Resurrection. Surely the divine harmony of the Soul of Christ, by its very contact with ours through the body, draws up towards spirituality even the very lowest energies of those souls which do not by earthly attachments nullify such attraction.

This same thought also lends a fresh beauty to that kind of prayer so common on the lips of the Saints, wherein, lamenting the limits to their consciousness and control, they nevertheless wish their very bodies to utter the praises of God. It is a longing anticipation

D

of the completeness of the hereafter. St. Gertrude's prayer is, perhaps, the most beautiful of them :— "O Almighty God, I sanctify, dedicate and consecrate to Thee every beating of my heart, and every pulsation of my blood : and I desire to make this compact with Thee, that their every movement shall say to Thee, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth : and I beseech Thee to impute this meaning to them, so that they may be before Thy Divine Majesty as the unceasing echo of that heavenly canticle which seraphim sing without ceasing unto Thee. Amen, amen." There is something lordly in that—the will dictating to the inferior powers what shall be the meaning of their action : they do not submit now, but they should submit, and but for sin they would, and hereafter by God's grace they shall : so the will, dethroned but still *de jure* the monarch, issues his commands, knowing that they will be ratified by Him who is to come as the Restorer of rights.

Such is the slight review I have space to make of the Material of the Art of Life ; and everyone can see what difficulties meet us at the very threshold. These difficulties do but increase with every onward step. The study of our Soul merely as it is, would be the hopeless task of a life-time ; and yet we are told that what it is, is nothing to what it shall be ; and that what it will be, is what by God's grace we must make it to be. By God's grace ! There it is. But for that, we should be badly off indeed. Yet I will say this, that even if we had not the light and strength of grace to aid us, our life-task still must be to put forth our feeble endeavours in the twilight of this world towards the dim shadowing forth of such spiritual

beauty as we could therein see. Even failure in a hopeless pursuit of perfection of spirit would be nobler than for the soul to find successful pleasure in the downward drift of material change. A thousand times rather would I be a melancholy Buddhist bonze, who has aimed at virtue and bemoans his failure, than a self-satisfied Pharisee who fancies that his faith precludes the need of mortification and effort, or than the Agnostic who looks on both faith and virtue as an empty dream.

CHAPTER III.

THE FORM OF THE ART—THE BEAUTY OF JUSTICE.

Amator factus sum Formæ illius.—Sap., viii, 2.

By far the most important thing to be considered in any Art is the Form to which the material has to be fashioned. There is an ideal of perfection enthroned in every artist's mind, and in all the nobler arts it is enthroned so high that man's supremest efforts fall far short of attaining to it—nay, the nearer the artist seems to others to approach, the more hopelessly does this ideal rise above him and beckon him ever upward. Those who cannot see this ideal, or seeing it do not love it, can lay no claim to brotherhood in the art, but to those who see

it and love it, however faintly and feebly, it becomes the master-vision of their lives. And this is true above all for the Art of Life.

It may be objected here, as it might have been objected before, that the ideal perfection of a noble life cannot properly be brought under any art : the soul itself develops into this perfection, does not create it : it is a growth, not a manufacture. For instance, it may be said, every tree has a typical beauty of form : would I call its growth towards this beauty a work of art ? Well, if the tree did it consciously and by its own efforts, I would ; and I should call the tree itself the artist. Inasmuch as the soul *fashions* its own life into perfection, I say its work is the work of an art : but inasmuch as it is *life* that it is fashioning, I say that its work transcends all other arts.

We must be careful also to bear in mind, though I seem to be tedious in insisting on it, that the Form and of a higher order than the material, is not in any way identical with the Material—the beauty of the Soul is not of the soul itself. The Art has sometimes suffered from a belief to the contrary—as, for instance, when the Stoicks took for their supreme law, “Live according to Nature.” The error is as great as if we measured the perfection of the animal life by the capabilities of the vegetable. No : the Soul is not the source of Moral Beauty, though it is full of capacities for it. But just as the Body is the material for the supervening form, the Soul ; so the Soul now is the material for the supervening form of Moral Beauty. In a similar way, *materia prima*

takes a form and becomes marble ; and then this marble takes a new form, not of itself, and becomes an Antinous. Yet note, that it is the marble which becomes beautiful, though the beauty is not of the marble. So also with the Soul.

What then is this Form which by our Art is superimposed upon the Soul ? If I were not afraid of being thought too metaphysical, I would claim that it is nothing else than that Absolute Beauty of which Plato speaks so divinely, and on which we are privileged to gaze in far stronger light than Plato ever knew. Winging his flight through and above the things of mere sense, this philosopher speaks of that which is "Beauty only, absolute, separate, simple and everlasting, which without diminution and without increase, or any change, is imparted to the ever-growing and perishing beauties of all other things. He who under the influence of true love rising upward from these begins to see that Beauty, is not far from the end. And the true order of going is to use the beauties of earth as steps along which he mounts upwards for the sake of that other Beauty, going from one to two, and from two to all fair forms, and from fair forms to fair actions, and from fair actions to fair notions, until from fair notions he arrives at the notion of Absolute Beauty, and at last knows what the essence of beauty is. This is that life above all others which man should live, in the contemplation of Beauty Absolute. What if man had eyes to see it ?" * Aye, what if ?

is no other than
Plato's Absolute
Beauty,

* *Symposium* : Prof. Jowett's Translation.

People often speak as if this and other passages of Plato were merely fanciful. To me they do not seem so. I should say that what attracts in them is not their beauty but their truth, were it not that I cannot find any dividing line between beauty and truth. Surely it is a plain fact that every earthly beauty is but a faint forth-shadowing of the Infinite Beauty of its Maker : surely it is His glory, and not their own, that the Heavens declare. And therefore it is not merely a poetical conceit, but a metaphysical reality we give expression to, when we look upon Nature as something only half hiding God from us—when in metaphor we say that it is a thing of varying transparency on whose myriad-facet surface perpetually play glints and gleams of dimmed and refracted rays of the Absolute Light and Loveliness shining behind.

This philosophical way of proceeding from the elements of physical beauty to the loftiest heights of abstraction, has been instinctively followed by all artists, and especially by those greatest of artists, the Saints. The musician has unutterable glimpses of Divine Beauty as his fingers wander over the keys. The poet says, and says truly :

To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

To the Psalmist of old, this was his favourite line of devotion. St. Francis of Assisi would have been hailed by Plato as the very embodiment of his theory. And we are told that it was a new epoch in the life of St.

Catherine of Siena when she first saw the sea, because it gave her a new view of Omnipotence. After all, has it ever been more beautifully put than in our Lord's words, "Consider the lilies of the field. . . . I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these"! To my mind this is the true function of Science; the body of it may be to increase the material comfort and power of man, but the soul of it is to minister to the higher life of contemplation.

But if anyone finds this abstract way of looking at things too philosophical or too poetical, his path is not therefore barred. The Form of our Art is quite visible enough in the concrete moral world to satisfy the most literal of minds. It is only necessary to put its various manifestations together into one idea. Even the earthly-minded are won by the innocence of children, by the purity of maidenhood, by the devotedness of filial piety, by the noble rage of patriotism. The heart thrills at the mere recital of deeds of fortitude, of heroism, of self-sacrifice. And if such deeds are done under our actual observation, or better still if they are done in our regard, we feel ourselves ennobled by their very contact. This is a reason that makes a priest perpetually grateful to Almighty God for his vocation, because thereby he sees such deeds more often, and more closely, and is permitted to share in them more fully, than he could otherwise ever have done. Now go all over the world and put together all the millions of such fair actions for but a single day: what a vast sum of beauty! And then remember how this has gone on for untold generations. I will not listen to

*It is also seen in
the prosaic
detail of life,*

any objection about a "far greater sum of evil." I know that the world with all its wickedness is "a vision to dizzy and appal," but I will not have the two things compared. Good is something positive : evil is not. Or, if I must compare them, then I say that good is more good than evil is evil, and that the virtue of God's universe out-balances its vice as surely as light gives us more pleasure than darkness gives us pain. As then this world of ours spins round in its orbit there goes up from it into the presence of God a sweet odour as of frankincense, a mighty volume of harmonious music, a vision of loveliness and grandeur, describe it by what sense you will, all of which is but the outward sign and partial manifestation of the Eternal Form of Beauty which verily dwells in our midst like the cloud of the glory of the Lord which covered the Tabernacle in the days of old.

It may be thought that this idea, thus summed up from the countless actions of all times and places, is universal and not individual, and if the individual be universalised that therefore, while it may indicate an aim for the race at large, it is no measure of the form of the single soul. But here I join issue. The true value of the idea consists in its universality. All art is universal, and that of life is no exception. There has never been a more backward step in either religion or philosophy than when Protestantism tried to persuade the world that man is an isolated individual in his relations towards God, judging all things by the accidental notions of his own mind, and judged merely according to the limitations of his own imperfect conscience. In the art of life, man's social relations are even more

important than his individual status, and the form into which we all are to be wrought, each in his own degree, is necessarily universal.

This form, in the abstract, we may call the Beauty of Justice. "Beauty of Holiness" is the more recognised phrase in English, as occurring in the Authorised Version, and moreover as sounding better: but "Beauty of Justice" is found in the Catholic translation (Jer. xxxi, 23), and expresses better what I mean. In Catholic theology, justice, or uprightness before God, is the rounded sum of all the virtues that can grace the soul of man. And, therefore, the form I mean is that *forma totius justitiae* (form of all justice) on which in the ordination service the Church wants all her priests to be modelled that they may live as ensamples to their flocks. Whether we call it Justice or Righteousness matters little: it is the thing, and not the name, that is important.

Religious and Moral Schools may be differentiated solely by their view and mode of pursuit of this Beauty of Justice, which is one and the same to all, but is different as looked at from different points of view, and even from the same point of view is variously apprehended.

Every partial view of it is true far as it goes, and is worth everything else that this world holds; and for the privilege of touching the mere hem of its garment the whole universe were cheaply sacrificed. So all the great Moral Artists have felt—notably the Sage who for the sake of it made his great Renunciation and

*It may be called
the Beauty of
Justice.*

*It is the touch-
stone of Truth,*

positively,

became the Light of Asia. Could he have but looked forward and known Him who made an infinitely greater renunciation and became the Light of the World !

On the other hand, every partial view, if true in so far as partial, is also false in so far as incomplete : for every art requires perfection. The and negatively, True Religion and the perfect Moral School will be found to be that (not those, for they cannot be different) which sees and aims at the Form of Justice in its entirety.

Every moral idea, then, which men have followed, has been followed for the sake of its participation in the Form of Justice. So that if I wanted to state a ready test for truth in Religion and Morality, I would state it thus :—go round the world and find all the moral ideas that have ever stirred the pulse and won the honourable love of mankind, and then the one Religion and the one School in which all the ideals are at home, it, and it alone, is the full Truth. If I, a Catholic, were to find one single moral beauty for which my Church could find no room, the whole universe would for me be dislocated and resolved into chaos. To put it strongly, were I a Buddhist and Christianity came to me represented by Puritanism, I say I should be justified before God in rejecting it ; for Buddhism has an ideal which Puritanism has not, and not even the sweet name of Christ should blind us to imperfection. The Buddhist might discover that his own ideal was incomplete, but he would feel that the other was not complete either ; therefore he would have the right to say, " We may both have

something to learn, but yours is certainly not the truth as God taught it." And assuredly a religion which holds up before mankind the triple perfection of Voluntary Poverty, Vowed Obedience and Complete Chastity, as Buddhism does, is *pro tanto* a better religion than one which does not.

So far we have seen that the harmonious combination of all moral ideas is the nearest we can come to a full view of Absolute Beauty, though even then we should find it towering above our highest flights of thought. At least, I ought to say, this would be the nearest we could come, unless, as Plato says, the Form of Virtue could become visible to mortal eyes. If Infinite Beauty has come to dwell amongst us bodily, then the best and fullest knowledge will come to us by fixing our gaze on Him. Direct intuition takes the place of laborious analysis and synthesis. The Mirror of Eternal Beauty once fell and broke into a thousand pieces, and it was the work of Truth to search out these bits and fit them together again; but now that a new mirror has been given us, of redoubled splendour, this search for fragments becomes the work of an antiquary rather than of an artist.

Here, then, we have the Form of the Art in its simplest and most perfect manifestation. All Truth, all Goodness and all Beauty is but the realised thought of the Wisdom of God, and the Wisdom of God is expressed in the Word, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us full of grace and truth, and of His fulness

It is concretely
presented to us
in the Incarnate
Word,

Who is the Way,
as well as the
Truth and the
Life.

we have all received. What formerly was only faintly apprehended by the greatest philosophers, and even then eluded their eager grasp, is now level with the understanding of any Christian child. "I thank Thee, Heavenly Father, that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes." God has sent into the world the whole theory of the Art of Life in what the prophet calls a *Verbum abbreviatum*, a Word compendiated into simplicity. There is still a philosophy in Christian theology, hard to learn and harder to expound: "we speak wisdom (*sophian*, a philosophy) among the perfect," as St. Paul says. But, according to the beautiful teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, there are two modes of apprehending this philosophy, one by the trained use of reason, the other *per modum connaturalitatis*, by establishing a kinship between it and the soul. It only remains to investigate how the soul is to acquire this kinship (*connaturalitatem*) with the Form thus set before us.

It might be thought that this Personality of Christ puts before us a model to copy rather than a form

The mystery of
the Incarnation
is essentially one
of transfor-
mation,

into which we are to be fashioned ;
but it must be remembered that this
Personality is Divine, and therefore
universal. "He took upon Himself
the common person of humanity,"

one of the Fathers says. "We speak a philosophy," says St. Paul, but it is "a philosophy of God in a mystery," and this mystery is the possibility of every human soul being transformed into Christ. So potent is its spell, that the mere gazing on it effects the change: "we all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face,

are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." The mystery is expressed to us under various metaphors,—the Vine and the branches,—the Body and the members,—the Temple and its co-ordinated parts,—the putting on of the New Man. St. Paul even boldly mixes the metaphors—"desiring to be clothed upon with our habitation that is from heaven . . . that which is mortal may be swallowed up by life." St. Peter more boldly still declares that we become "partakers of the Divine Nature." So true can this transformation be, that it becomes recognisable even in this life, according to the proverb *Sacerdos alter Christus* (that the priest should be another Christ), or as the apostle beautifully says, "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." And the process of transformation is a gradual one, consisting of countless successive acts of consecration. For this purpose, that is, to carry out the work of the Art of Life, every Christian soul is endowed with a priestly power over itself. Of course for all social relations concerning the whole Mystical Body (by far the most important part of our life) we are dependent on the priesthood of the whole Body, specialised in certain members; but for our individual relations towards God we are endowed with a priestly jurisdiction over our own souls—we can bless ourselves, judge ourselves, procure pardon, and consecrate ourselves. "We, being many, are one bread," says St. Paul; and every act of virtue in us is by God's priestly power a kind of "*Hoc est corpus meum*" to consecrate us into Christ.

Thus it is that we keep our full individuality, and yet also universalise ourselves, as true art must

necessarily do. The Buddhists of old, the greatest moral artists outside of Christendom, knew that this should be the aim of the art, could **dimly adumbrated even by heathen philosophers,** they but see how it was to be done. The adept in virtue, according to them, must "merge his personality," and must "reveal in himself the Law which knows no selfish thought :" and the Surangama Sutra contains the following magnificent idea—"This original perfect Heart, in its very nature mysteriously effulgent, boundless yet one, pervading greatest and least, enthroned in the smallest particle of dust, yet turning the great Wheel of the Law, apart from sense, differing from all existing objects, is yet possessed by all." Into this Heart, which they unknowingly adored, we consecrate and transform ourselves. The more deeply our intuitions penetrate into the spiritual world, the more conscious does this mysterious transformation become. We cannot add a cubit to our bodily stature, as our Lord says, but there is no limit to the cubits we may add to the stature of the soul ; and this conscious growth in the supernatural is the highest form of human existence.

With this Ideal before us we can begin to understand the great Plan of which the present universe is but the preliminary workshop : we begin to get an insight into the glory of being fellow-workers with God. There is a splendid spiritual temple all quivering with life and beauty, now in course of erection : for some niche or corner of this temple we are now fashioning ourselves. When this temple is wholly finished according to the postulates
 but fully manifested only in the hereafter.

(secret to us) of the Art by which God works, by which we also work, then this temporary workshop will be set aside. No sound of iron tool is heard in the temple itself : all the work is done here below. Some work, it is true, has to be rejected : and hell is nothing but the waste material, the wrong copies, the spoiled sketches, the wilful blunders of God's workshop, which being first trodden under foot are afterwards swept away into the outer darkness. But all honest work is accepted. And if, when our work is finished, and we are really fitted for our niche, if (I say) we do not at once appear in our full glory here below, it is only because the results of our work are not seen without the surrounding scaffolding necessary to it. That scaffolding has to be removed by death, and our work tried as by fire, before we are allowed to become an integral portion of the Eternal Form of Universal Beauty.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GENIUS OF THE ART—MORAL INTUITION
ILLUMINATED BY FAITH.

Sed vos unctionem habetis a Sancto, et nostis omnia.
I. Jo. ii, 20.

ALL the Arts are selective. Choice and discrimination are the most fundamental of their processes, and the corresponding taste and insight are their supremest qualities. Not every subject is a fit theme for painting at least not without idealising ; nor is every sound a part of music. Moreover, themes as well as sounds

The selectiveness
of art

have their harmonies, and even good subjects are often excluded by the presence of others. Further still, there are many ways of approaching a theme, and each artist expresses himself in his own way : thus freedom of individual handling is necessary to every art, and this too has its harmonies. The formal restraint of Sophocles would have hampered Shakespeare : the bountiful liberty of Shakespeare would have seemed unworthy license to Sophocles. The facial delicacy in Fra Angelico's pictures would be effeminate in Michael Angelo ; while the muscular vigour in Michael Angelo's would be a monstrosity in Fra Angelico. We see, therefore, that the function of selectiveness ranges over the whole field of the artist himself, and over the whole universe outside. His reasons for choosing or rejecting are both internal and external, and the question of what to reject is as important as the question of what to choose.

Now the development of the artist himself does not fall under our special analysis. The process of it varies with the artist, but its origins baffle inspection. Who can tell why one musician takes to the violin, another to the organ ? No one wants a drama from Wordsworth, or an epic from Burns ; yet no one asks why. The bent of genius is determined by some original force, yet sometimes it seems an accident, sometimes training, that fixes its exact direction. In the art of Catholic life we call it vocation. The rugged virtue that sends a John the Baptist to the desert is no less admirable than the sweet gentleness that keeps a Philip Neri in a town ; and an Elizabeth of Hungary is as glorious in her

wedded life as a Catherine of Siena in her maidenhood. The light to see and the freedom to follow are the great requisites for every artist and for every individual soul.

The question of choice in the subject itself falls under two heads—things that belong to an art by their very nature, and things that can be made to belong by transformation. The former are discovered by the artist's intuition : the latter are transfigured by the artist's idealism. The subject of the present chapter is intuition : that of the next will be idealism.

There are some things in every art that strike the dullest perception. The glory of a tropical sunset, the colours of an English wood in autumn, a snowy array of Alpine peaks, make all of us long to be painters. The tinkle of a brook, the rhythmic roll of breakers, or the song of a thrush, are felt by all to be an essential part of music. Every babe in its mother's arms, every heroic death in battle, every sacrifice for freedom, belongs of right to the realm of poetry. But where everybody sees, the artist will see with intensity ; and often it is not until he has seen, that the rest of the world shares his vision. There are many Peter Bells, of whom Wordsworth said :

A primrose by the river's brim

A yellow primrose was to him

And it was nothing more :

but there are not many Wordsworths, who can say of themselves with truth :

To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

Obviously, therefore, the first step in any art is to learn how to perceive and what to perceive. Rossini could say, "Whatever pleases my ear is good music": but one has to be a Rossini to be able to say it with truth. The learner always has to begin by finding out with shame the extent of his bad taste and the narrow limits of his apprehension.

What the artist's eye is in painting, and a delicately trained ear is in music, that the faculty of correct

moral intuition is in the Art of Life.

It is a result of discipline, That this, in spite of the almost universal claim to the possession of it, is a rarity in the world—that it is a product of genius and of training, and not a spontaneous growth of instinct—humanity still needs the voice of Socrates to remind it. There is no theory more common, and there is no theory more false, than that every man has a right to be to himself the measure of morality. It is a right that can be acquired, but it has to be acquired before it is possessed. In every art there are only two kinds of people who are peremptory and dogmatic in their judgments—the consummate artist and the utter fool. Most of us are somewhere between.

In the title of this chapter, I have called the faculty "moral intuition illuminated by faith." This might

and requires to be guided by faith. seem as if I intended to exclude the moral philosophers of the Pagan world. Everything I have hitherto said, however, shows that I have no

such intention. A definition ought to aim at suggestion of the highest as well as inclusion of the lowest; and if one of the two has to suffer, it had better be the latter. Yet my addition of the word "faith" does

not altogether exclude them. The light that enlighteneth every man coming into this world must have shone with special strength into the souls of those who so earnestly felt after the Truth, Goodness and Beauty, which, whether they knew it or not, is God : and every human response to this Divine shining is of the nature of faith. "The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole earth ;" and I cannot but think that it was with some degree of the virtue of faith helping their natural insight that such men as Buddha and Plato reached their moral level. There is something very touching in these early efforts after perfection, and like all early art they sometimes produce simple effects which are beyond our reach in these more conscious days. The naïve ignoring of the perspectives of space and time in the dawn of painting is impossible now, and the old quaint delight in the discovery of some half moral truth is not for us to whom perhaps the whole of that truth seems to have become commonplace. Thus a Giotto with all its crudity may still be as high a work of art as a Sassoferato, and we may learn more from Epictetus than from many a moral theologian. Therefore I claim the right to put faith in the foreground, and yet not part company with those choice souls whom even the strict justice of Dante could not doom to Inferno.

Now this faculty of intuition is not merely intellectual. It is not taught to children in the catechism, nor to theological students in the lecture room. One may have studied the whole of theology, and still possess very little of it. Theological knowledge makes the moral critic, not the moral artist.

*It is of the heart
more than of the
brain,*

A mere child in years, like Aloysius Gonzaga, may make new revelations of it, just as did the baby Mozart in music. Of course the finished product is really higher. The flower is better than the bud, and the fruit than the flower : but the bud is often the most charming. The strong commanding power of a Leo the Great or the ripe disciplined intellect of a Thomas Aquinas is on a far higher plane than any instincts of childhood however gracious, just as the Mozart who wrote his own Requiem was a nobler figure in Music than the baby Mozart who blotted his first sonata with his tears. Nevertheless these child Saints seem to raise the Art itself more completely above humanity. One feels that nothing was owing to them, but everything to it. If I may use our Lord's words in a new sense without irreverence, I should say that in them "Wisdom is justified of her *children*."

It may be said that my talk is all of Saints, and they are few : whereas the Art of Life, if it is profitable to talk of it at all, should be for the million. But my method is not exceptional. Music, too, has its widening circles of influence until it becomes well-nigh universal. There are thousands of musicians whose names are never heard beyond their little sphere ; millions who love and appreciate music whose names are never heard at all ; many more millions who love and have to content themselves with the wish to appreciate ; and all are glad to be in some way in it and of it ; even the unconscious baby sleeps the better for his mother's lullaby. Yet when we talk of music, it is only the few masters we think of naming. It is always, or

and is learnt
more from genius
than from criticism.

should be always, the highest genius that sets the taste for mankind. So I am only following my own principle of suggesting the higher while not excluding the lowest. "We needs must love the highest when we see it :" but it is so far above us that really to see it we must look at it and into it long and lovingly. When I first went to Rome, I had a sneaking consciousness that I shared Mark Twain's openly confessed preference for the freshly coloured copy over the grimy "Old Master ;" but after some years of frequently visiting the galleries until every great picture there became familiar, I began to be conscious of the dawning of a taste which, being based on principles of truth and beauty, might with artistic discipline, rise even to rapture. The Lives of the Saints are the Art Gallery of Life.

It is this personal and incalculable character of art-intuition that separates the arts from the sciences. Science progresses : the undergraduate of to-day starts with access to knowledge which Newton never had, and we can confidently predict that organic life will be better classified a century hence than now. But we may question whether Italy will ever produce a greater poet than Dante, or Austria a greater musician than Beethoven. Art culminates : science accumulates. In fact all art-intuition is a symbol, and, rightly regarded, a kind of promise, of the grace which is the whole moving force of the art of life. That is why of old they thought that the poet was possessed by some divine afflatus, and why we still speak of the "inspirations" of art. One would think, to read the average forecast of the day, that the

Its variations
are not subject
to calculation.

religion and morality of the future was in the hands of scientists and professors—that one or two more applications of the Evolution Theory are going to lift the human race into a higher plane, and that only knowledge is required for the “grand progress that is bearing humanity onward to perfection.” Evolution itself gives no such promise for the arts. The future of music is not in the hands of the critics : it lives on the memory of the genius that is gone and on the hopes of genius to come. So also with life, or rather so much more with life, where we have to deal with grace as well as nature.

There is a special point to be borne in mind in testing the artist's intuition. It is based on that Theory

It manifests itself best in small things, of Relativity which modern psychologists make so much of, but which has always been a commonplace in Catholic schools. Put into art lan-

guage, it signifies that the higher the light is, the deeper is the contrast of shade ; and the keener the delight of harmony the more excruciating the pain of discord. Thus an artist is separated from other men, not by his higher admiration for what all the world admires,—for if a nocturne of Chopin thrills me to the full extent of my musical being, how can I measure that the musician next to me is feeling it a thousand times as much ?—but by the intensity of his joy in trifles, the *poco piu* and the *poco meno* of his art, and by the poignancy of his abhorrence of everything that is contrary to taste. This quality is very remarkable in the Saints. It has often been objected against them as a proof of want of balance : in truth it is the strongest indication of the reality of their art. When

Mrs. Oliphant, in her otherwise charming life of St. Francis, is pityingly patronising over his little joys, and scornfully indignant at his extravagant resistance to temptation, it is just this point that she misses. When she goes on to think it a pity that he did not settle down and marry St. Clare, she only manifests her utter incompetence as an art-critic. One might as well take Beethoven's best sonata, and say patronisingly that it has a few snatches of pleasing melody, but that its harmonies are crude and its composition defective. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets," and not to the critics.

There is perhaps no single thing which affords stronger presumption of the divinity of the Christian faith than the contrast between the Catholic Church and the rest of the world in this matter of insight. Whereas in the Pagan world such views as they could get of the Moral Ideal were partial, rare and transient, in Christendom they have been complete, abundant and sustained. It is on account of its being the doorway to faith that baptism was of old called "illumination" (Heb. vi, 4). This, too, is why we are called children of the light, and why our Lord Himself chose for His title the Light of the World. And it is a curious fact that, wherever Catholic unity is kept, no matter how much this ideal may have been profaned, it is ever being renewed without loss ; but where that unity is broken, the ideal is obscured. It stagnates in the Oriental Schism : it was distorted by Gallicanism : it is maimed by Protestantism. Hereby we see that it is a corporate and not an individual faculty : the insight really belongs

and is a special feature of the Catholic Church.

to that complex Personality which, as Matthew Arnold dimly saw, is "the Artist of all the ages."

Hence the universal contrast between the Church and the World is most keenly perceived and most manifestly revealed in those in whom

It is mainly exercised in the struggle against "the world," this artistic instinct is the strongest. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, our Faith :" and their highest aspiration is to keep them-

selves "unspotted from this world." Every art makes its own fundamental distinction and has its own abhorrence: poetry cannot bear the prosaic, music shrinks from mere noise. If we are asked what "the world" is, we reply that it is the mere noise of Nature, just as Heaven is its fullest music. "The world" is to each individual that which is for him and his vocation inconsistent with the art of life. And when we are told to walk by faith and not by sight, we may almost paraphrase it into "walking by insight and not by out-sight."

It is the exercise of this insight that develops the character of sanctity as we recognise it through

and develops the universal conception of "sanctity." all changes of place and time—that boundless humility which the world scorns, combined with a sweet unruffled dignity which the world

cannot help envying: that apparently extravagant estimate of chastity as being the flower of all virtue, capable of infinite perfection: the fierce intolerance of the least fleck on their own mirror of it, yet not excluding an almost scandalising gentleness towards "women taken in adultery :" that reckless delight in a poverty that should paralyse their influence

along with an uncalculating consciousness of infinite resource : that abject obedience to all rightful authority however unreasonably exercised, startlingly varied with inflexible independence when occasion demands : that crushing sense of the overwhelming power of evil in the world, illumined with the cheeriest of all optimisms : that unfailing good humour, and a life growing brighter and brighter as even old age advances: that reaching out of heart and intellect to the far off Infinite, which seems only to quicken their faithful responsiveness to all the nearest ties of humanity : the life which conquers, and the death which triumphs: all the fruits of the Holy Spirit, and the sum of all the beatitudes. This is the real Burning Bush, into the presence of which when we come we take the shoes from off our feet, for we are standing on holy ground.

CHAPTER V.

THE TRANSFORMING IDEALISM OF THE ART— INTENTION OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

"Our Liturgy bids us sing, 'We give thee Thanks for Thy great glory,' because His glory is identical with our salvation."

WHAT an Art conquers is often dearer to it than what it merely finds ; artists therefore seem to make more of their idealising power than of their intuition. The latter is Idealism the most characteristic of their more fundamental quality, but all art-qualities. the former is more characteristic. Intuition is measured by the depth to which they

look *into* things ; idealism is their peculiar way of looking *at* things. Architecture singles out some wild acanthus ; Painting, some ruinous wayside cottage ; Poetry, some scampering field-mouse or passing cloud,—all of them things that mankind's millions “see nothing in” ; but transformed by the ideal touch of the artist's treatment, common though they be, they become fit denizens of the Empire of Art. And Art gives as well as takes. Thenceforward every wayside cottage speaks to us with a colour-language we should otherwise never have seen, and every field-mouse in the world is glorified by the one little mousie which Burns's plough dispossessed. Not only do we love the Corinthian column for the sake of the acanthus ; we also love the acanthus for the sake of the column.

It is this idealising faculty that enables the poet out of the commonest materials to suggest the

sublime. The lightest touch does
Its more than magic power it,—often only “a flash of silence.”

Like Prospero, he takes the universe into partnership with himself and makes it speak his language. To any airy nothing his magic “gives a local habitation and a name.” No writer ever had the faculty in greater perfection than that artist-soul among the Apostles, St. John. What a gloom gathers round the crime of Judas when we read, “He therefore, having received the morsel, went out immediately : *and it was night.*” What brightness of joy in contrast, when we read, “But when the morning was come, Jesus stood upon the shore.” And the most effective silence in the whole range of literature is his account of the institution of the Blessed

Eucharist :—“ Before the festival day of the pasch, Jesus knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He *loved them unto the end*.—And when supper was done,” (he had mentioned the supper only in the silence) he then proceeds to tell of the washing of the feet. The whole of our Liturgy abounds in this poetic quality. For instance, that sublime responsory in the office of Martyrs,—“ Terra apparuit arida, et in mari rubro via sine impedimento.” The text, of course, comes from Wisdom xix, 7, and there it simply refers to the historical passage of the Red Sea ; but, quoted for the martyrs, without the change of a word it comes to mean : “ Earth seemed to them a wilderness, and through the red sea of their blood they found an open path to Paradise.” I will give yet another example, for the poetry of our Liturgy touches very closely on the Art of Life. From the days of the Fathers, *lux matutina*, the morning light, has been the accepted symbol of Heaven’s eternal morning. Now, there is a part of the Divine Office appointed for every division of the day, and the part appointed for the morning light is called Prime. Every part of the Divine Office (except Prime) ends with a short collect followed by a petition for the souls in purgatory. In Prime, the office of the “ morning light,” just when we are expecting to say “ Fidelium animæ,” where, indeed, we do say it sometimes if we are distracted, our thoughts are suddenly turned heavenwards, instead of purgatory-wards, by the reading of the Martyrology and the versicle, “ Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints.” Thus, to those

that think of it, every morning is glorified into eternity.

My last example is more than illustrative : it is typical. The Saints have always taken the universe ^{illuminates all life with glory} into partnership with themselves to speak the language of grace. Of course in a vague, inarticulate way all creation speaks of its Creator. "Deep calls upon deep." "The heavens shew forth the glory of God." "Fire, hail, snow, ice, stormy winds, which fulfil his word : mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars praise the Lord." But this is not enough : man is the lord of creation, and feels himself entitled to put a meaning into its action. We have already seen the beauty of St. Gertrude's prayer, in which the soul dictates the meaning of the inferior life of the body : now we see how, extending the principle, humanity, as it were the soul of the universe, imposes on that universe its own rational will in a hymn of articulate praise. "Because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." Whether by association, or by metaphor, or by convention, or by sacrifice, or by sheer force of will, everything in the universe has been made to contribute to God's great liturgy of praise. ' The whole world has been made sacramental. Indeed, is not the very purpose of its existence thus to minister to the Art of Life ? "The expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God :" and it is something higher than poetry that sweeps up the whole visible creation into the current of grace which bears humanity upwards towards God.

The touch by which this transformation is effected is what is called in Christian language the thought or intention of the glory of God. It ^{from within;} should not seem strange to attribute so great a power to a simple thought. After all, are not all visible things mere transitory symbols ? and is not thought the real permanence ? The spiritual can neither create nor destroy the material, but it can and does animate it. What a corpse is without the soul, that a deed is without a motive. The same external act may be an offence or an honour : the same substance may be a waste remnant or a symbol of Empire. Everything in life depends on the "intention" ; and if this truth is not more widely understood, it is because so many lives are purposeless.

When we come to the question what shall be the intention which can add most beauty to life, true knowledge cannot hesitate a moment.

It must be the same intention as <sup>But this glory
is the glory
of God,</sup> moves the very Creator of life and its supreme Beautifier. The *Gloria in excelsis* of the Mass, the *Gloria Patri* after every psalm, the *Ad majorem Dei gloriam* of St. Ignatius, the *In omnibus glorificetur Deus* of St. Benedict, show how deeply this enters into the instincts of the faithful. In all His works, God's purpose is to manifest His essential and beneficent glory, and the whole course of Redemption is, to use the splendid redundancy of St. Paul, "unto the praise of the glory of his grace in which he hath graced us in his beloved Son." There is no real redundancy in the words when we analyse them. God works in us through his Son : that work transforms us into the supernatural, or "graces" us :

that grace is His glory veiled : glory is grace manifested : praise is the utterance of that manifestation. Our purpose in the world, then, is the utterance of God's glory, and, as actions speak louder than words, such utterance must be in all our deeds. For there is no other glory than that of God, and any deed which seeks our own glory is a contradiction of our purpose in life. "All things, therefore, whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

There is at first an instinctive movement of dislike in the mind when we hear that God seeks His own glory. But we must not subject the Infinite to our broken thoughts. To seek one's own glory is in a creature an unwarrantable selfishness : the Infinite is beyond the possibility of being selfish. Therefore in defining God's purpose I worded it "to manifest His essential and beneficent glory." Any glory we might aim at for ourselves is neither essential nor beneficent : and therefore pride is against both the True and the Good, and consequently is the very opposite of the Beautiful. On the contrary, God's glory being the one essential truth, which is in danger of being hidden, its manifestation is the source of all Goodness, which would otherwise be suppressed, and of all Beauty, which requires to be evoked. Hence the axiom which I have used as the motto of the present chapter, *Gloria ejus salus nostra*.

Yet, although selfishness cannot be mentioned in the same breath with God, it does not follow that

unselfishness is also out of all relation with Him. In real truth, notwithstanding the negative form of the word, it is unselfishness that is the positive quality. It means the inclusion of other lives within our own, and the beauty and perfection of it grows with the extent and the completeness of this inclusion. Every limiting of such inclusion is a beginning of selfishness. As soon then as we see that unselfishness is a positive perfection, we know that it exists in God to an infinite degree. Not only are all creatures absolutely enclosed within the Being of God, but the Three Persons of the Godhead are themselves infinitely involved in the existence of one another.

This is far from being a merely metaphysical consideration. It is exceedingly practical for the Art of Life. If all the arts are, as Ruskin says, the expression of man's delight in God's work, this art rises to the supreme delight of actual co-operation, and its motto is, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern which was shown thee on the mount." If unselfishness is of the essence of the work of the Supreme Artist, it must be so also of ours.

It is well for us therefore to remember that the Heavenly Father did not reveal Himself as such, but waited until His Son came into the world to reveal Him: that the Son did not glorify Himself but waited until the Father revealed Him, and then committed all the success of His work to the Holy Spirit: that the Spirit "shall not speak of Himself," but glorifies the Son. The gift

It is the foundation of all unselfishness,

which God reveals to us as a model

in Himself

of the Father is faith in the Son : the gift of the Son is the comfort of the Holy Ghost : the gift of the Holy Ghost is the sonship of the Father. The Divine circle is completed in infinite unselfishness.

It becomes still more visible in God's relation to His creatures. He seeks our salvation with such an ardour, combined with such a ^{and in His} respect for our freedom of will, that ^{dealings with us,} one of the saints was emboldened to say that "it looked just as if man were God's final end." The utter self-annihilation of the Incarnation is meant to be to us the unquestioned proof of God's infinite sincerity in the marvellous exchange that He has proposed to us—the exchange of unselfishness—that we are to seek His glory, and He will seek ours. Half the troubles of the spiritual life come from our seeking our own salvation, instead of trusting to the far direcer aim of God's glory. We, too, have a share in our Lord's words, "I seek not My own glory : there is one that seeketh."

The parallel goes a step further still. It is a familiar fact that the Saints seek their own salvation least when

<sup>even to the
verge of
recklessness.</sup> most secure of it. See St. Paul's grand recklessness of statement in the words, "I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ for my

brethren who are my kinsmen according to the flesh." See St. Catherine of Siena's willingness to be bound to the gates of hell if thereby she could act as a bar to further entrance there. In precisely the same way, God seeks His own glory least where He is surest of it. See how He lays aside His dignity with some of His Saints, pleading with a Job, yielding to an

Abraham, awaiting the consent of Mary, and through the ages scandalising sinners by the familiarity of His condescensions to those who love Him. He knows where His honour is safe, and we in our turn ought to know where our glory is secure.

It is not surprising, therefore, in view of this kingly exchange, that, just as by putting our intention into things and actions we direct them to the glory of God, so by His putting His intention into things and actions He should direct them to the salvation of man. It is essential for us to use material things as symbols and implements of our worship of Him : it is His fidelity to our covenant of co-operation, to use them as symbols and implements of His grace. The visible world is the stepping-stone whereby faith rises to God : it is also the stepping-stone whereby grace comes down to meet it. Hence the efficacy of the Sacraments, and the value of the sacramentals.

When God puts an intention into a thing, the effects are not merely imaginary. "*Ipse dixit et facta sunt : ipsi benedicere est benefacere.*

He spoke, and things were made : with Him, to say a blessing is to do a blessing." Therefore when He puts His intention into water, it substantially regenerates ; or if into oil, it sanctifies ; or if into bread and wine, the true Shekinah is in our midst. These are but echoes of the great intention whereby He put Himself into human nature, so that the sacramental system is an integral part of the Incarnation—a continuation of the same thought of God. When the

There is a Divine
interchange
between His
glory and our
salvation.

Hence Sacra-
ments and
Sacramentals.

Spouse of Christ, *meditans ut columba*, brooding like a dove over the thoughts of God, still further continues the idea by blessing and dedicating shrines, crosses, robes, symbols, as vehicles of devotion, we know that her intention has not the substantiative efficacy of the intention of God, but we recognise the resemblance by calling such things "sacramentals." The Sacraments are superior to our private prayers in proportion as God's intention is superior to ours ; and the sacramentals, in the proportion of the intention of the Church. The harmony of the three intentions is our one source of grace. This is "the ladder standing upon earth, and the top thereof touching heaven, the angels also of God ascending and descending by it."

This reality, or thing-changing power, which characterises God's intention, is still for us a matter of imitation. Although we cannot transform the things themselves, we can transform their relations to us and our relations to God. Philosophers would say that He transforms

Idealism, the shadow of God's transforming power,
objectively, but that we can transform subjectively. Both with Him and with us, the value of the change is measured by the end and not by the beginning. A human act procures the glory of God, not in proportion to the grandeur of the act, but in proportion to the intensity of the intentional change. No one would value the salutary effects of Baptism by the quality of the water, and God deals with our acts as He expects us to deal with His. Hence the great care with which Holy Church tries to persuade all her children to keep up the reality of their intention. A perfunctory "act of intention" in morning prayer will do very

little towards penetrating the mass of life's daily detail if it is not reinforced by continuous virtual or actual repetition. This is the main function of ejaculatory prayer.

The same consideration shows us how necessary it is for the Art of Life to make the intention universal as well as effective. Life is made up of infinite detail, and every jot of it can be infinitely charged with the glory of God. Thus, in mathematical language, the value of life can be made equal to infinity raised to the infinite power. When Mary cooked a dinner, she pleased and glorified God more than the Seraphim sounding His praises in Heaven. In Art the possibilities of beauty are unlimited.

The indissoluble bond which we have seen to exist between the systems of Sacrament and Intention—between God's work for our salvation and our work for His glory—becomes also negatively evident in the history of Protestantism. The attack on "works" went hand in hand with the rejection of Sacraments. Forgetful of the divine bargain with God, the Reformers called on the world to revel in a sense of the security of its salvation, leaving the glory of God to take care of itself. The Church was blamed for striving to secure salvation by its works, and at the same time with a curious parallel inversion blamed for glorifying itself by the Sacraments. As a matter of fact, what the Church then and now and always aims at is to glorify God by her works and to receive salvation for men by the Sacraments. The Sacraments are the actions whereby God

keeps His side of the covenant : good works are the actions whereby we keep ours. Those who denied the latter were bound to have their eyes blinded to the former.

This has led to a great want of definiteness in Protestant life. In spite of many happy inconsistencies,

is necessarily a work of practical detail. it cannot be denied that the general tendency of Protestantism is both to minimise the sacramental principle, and to discourage that minute

attention to moral detail which is the very soul of the Art of Life. I do not forget George Herbert and his felicitous phrase about intention " making drudgery divine :" nor do I ignore the fact that many a Protestant does more with his few sacramental remnants than many a Catholic with the whole round. I speak of the general tendency. In this Art, Protestants are impressionists. They employ vague sweeps and splashes of colour, and deprecate close inspection. But true Art demands infinite detail and submits to endless analysis. The highest painter reveals himself in the ravishing delicacy of his lightest touches, and the truest idealism is that which seizes upon infinite detail and suffuses it to an exquisite degree with the glory of God.

The effect of this grand unselfishness is that by the very virtue of it we gradually rise beyond ourselves. The glory of God radiates its efficacy spontaneously, and creates wherever it shines. " We all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

CHAPTER VI.

THE PLASTIC POWER OF THE ART,—GRACE.

"To Him who is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand, according to the power that worketh in us."—Eph. iii., 20.

IN the first chapter I said that my aim was to describe (1) the energy, (2) the genius, (3) the means, (4) the transforming touch, *Grace, a Force* (5) the material, and (6) the form, of the Art of Life. Four of these have now been treated of, and it remains to speak of the energy or power by which the Art works, and of the instrument or means whereby that power is put into operation.

At once I am met by a preliminary objection. What else did I mean but Grace when I was describing the Form of the Art? And if Grace is a Form how can it be a Force? The difficulty is not a real one, and it is sufficient to reply that there are often various ways of looking at the same thing, and that a thing is best known by looking at it from every point of view. As a fact, we are quite familiar with the practical identity of form and force. Any object of sense reveals itself to us as a form : but our senses are only channels by which the vibrations of the world's energy are brought to the doors of our consciousness. Inside our mind, the form of a thing is our mental summary of the meaning of all its material modes of acting on us. In its external presentation, the form is simply

analysed into vibrations of light, heat, sound, and so forth. That is, in Nature, externally to ourselves, there is practically no difference between a form and the sum-total of forces producing that form. But as there is often a distinct advantage in considering the forms of things separately, and the forces of Nature separately, so shall it be for us now. We have regarded Grace as an ideal perfection of form into which our souls are to be fashioned, and we are now to regard the same Grace as a force, or a complex of forces, actuating the transformation. The distinction is akin to that made by theologians between *gratia operans* and *gratia cooperans*, of which St. Thomas tells us that the former fashions us into our ideal perfection, the latter enables us to do the work of that perfection (1) Formerly, we considered the universe as a hierarchy of forms, Grace being the highest because it is the wedding of Divine with created beauty. Now, we can consider the universe as a complex of energies, of which Grace again is the highest, because it is the union of God's work with man's.

A true conception of Grace—a *real* apprehension of it, as distinguished from a *notional* (2)—is a

**may be
understood** very different thing from the catechetical or dogmatic definition of it.

The latter can be easily learned as a result from the teaching of authority : the Councils declare it, the catechism formulates it, theologians

(1) *Summa Ia. IIæ.*, q. cxi, 2.

(2) The unfolding of this distinction is one of the most illuminating portions of Newman's teaching. See his "Grammar of Assent,"—a difficult book, but one to the understanding of which every Catholic should aspire.

unfold it. The former is really not attainable except by practical familiarity with Grace itself: Yet, we do somehow get a better mental hold on it by a sort of induction or analogy. We can creep up to it, as it were, through an avenue of things that grow more and more like it, until our mind is prepared for the final leap.

Throughout the universe there is a steady advance in grades of existence. First there is the fire-mist of chaos, from which our solar system seems to have emerged, and in which the nebulae of the heavens still remain. Then there is the stage of differentiated minerals gradually cooling into stability, as in the sun, or still more in the planet Jupiter. Then, however it originated, we step onward into vegetable life,—an inward, self-centred, but not self-perceiving, responsiveness to external stimulus. A higher combination introduces into the world the higher principle of sensation and consciousness. Above that is the life of reason and free choice. The last stage —introducing quite as clearly as any of the others, and to a far higher degree, a new principle, a new combination, and a new form—is the life of Grace. There is no possible higher stage, for this is the step from the life of man to the life of God.

It is a remarkable fact that each of these stages, here and there in the course of its upward development, seems to anticipate the next,— apes it, as it were, beforehand, and thus deceives the unwary. Until the spectroscope told us better, every nebula was thought to be a resolvable Milky Way.

as the highest
of the stages of
existence,

which seem to
merge into one
another, both
upwards

Many minerals, silver for example, crystallise into seeming vegetable forms, and infiltrations of manganese oxide are often by beginners taken for fossil ferns. The sensitive plant shrinks from the touch, and sun-dews catch and eat insects, just as if they had nerves of feeling and taste. Dogs and horses appear to reason, and sometimes show all the external signs of a moral conscience. Yet, all these anticipations are fully explicable by the laws appropriate to the stage in which they occur, and are by no means actuated by the principles of the stage they imitate. In precisely the same way, Nature often by a sort of unconscious prophecy foreshadows the works of Grace—as in the innocence of childhood, in a naturally sweet temper, and so forth.

On the other hand, each stage seems at times to descend to lower levels. There are plants that behave like minerals, and animals which ~~and downwards,~~ degenerate to apparently vegetative structure. Reason often deliberately does the work of instinct, and does it badly. It seems as if in the universe all sharp lines of demarcation are to be obliterated, and all stages are meant to glide into one another like the colours of a rainbow. “Wisdom reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly.”

We do not of course forget that this gradual merging of each stage into the next is considered by many modern thinkers as a proof that the universe is merely a product of material evolution, that in reality the differences are only of degree, that even intellect is a phase of feeling and grace a figment of the
but are essentially distinct

imagination. Those who think thus have no common standing ground with us with regard to the Art of Life. If they are logical, they cannot hold even the immortality of the soul. Obviously, we cannot be for ever discussing first principles. It is the Art point of view we are taking now, and not that of Philosophy. Yet, even if it were Philosophy,—but I refrain.

I say then that we must not allow this gradation ever to blind our eyes to superiorities that are real. Order is essentially higher than chaos. Sensation is above any and every inanimate mode of being. The smallest degree of intellect outweighs the whole round of feeling. The speech of a parrot may be often absurdly appropriate, but we do not permit it really to deceive us. So too we must not be misled by appearances into doubting the entire supremacy of grace. If we do not directly perceive it, it is because we lack the force within ourselves. A dog can in an indirect sort of way appreciate the superiority of man, but only in so far as intellect projects itself on the plane of sense. So too the intellect can get a notional apprehension of the things of grace, but direct and real knowledge can be had only in the higher plane of grace itself.

To pursue the comparison, each successive stage of existence is characterised by a higher and closer organisation. The combining forces become more complex as we ascend; the units of combination rise in dignity; their interaction grows more delicate, and their proportions more subtly poised; their bond of union at the same time is often

*The higher the
force, the higher
the organisation,*

more vulnerable, and the results of the whole combination are more and more varied and beautiful. In the nebula, the force of gravitation merely holds together a mass of conflicting atoms. In a star, chemical affinity has introduced order among molecules. In the cool of a planet, minerals take the higher form of crystals. On the earth, life combines cells into organic kinds. In the Incarnation, the highest of all created units, angels and men are organised into the single Personality of Christ,—not by a metaphor, but by a mystery which is the crown of the universe.

Now just as chemical affinity is the plastic or formative power of minerals, and irritability (or blind responsiveness to stimulus) that of plants, and sensitiveness that of animals; and as the life of man is but brutal, if it be not formed by the force of reason,—so the organism of the Incarnation, the New Creation, generates and forms and manifests all its life by the power of Grace.

Further, each grade assumes into itself all the lower powers as well as its own, and its beauty becomes a microcosm, or physical epitome, of comprehending all below. Thus we have a gradual all the rest. crescendo of the instruments in the great orchestra of creation. Even the nebula glows. Water, while freezing, creates on our windows, like an inanimate artist, exquisite forms of beauty through the play of all the nebula's forces as well as its own. The lily, still unconscious, improves on the hexagonal plan of the ice-crystals, and though

it toils not neither does it spin, produces a sweetness winning the praise of its very Creator. The weaver-bird and the nightingale, instinctive architect and musician, sum up into loveliness all that has preceded them, and point to better things to come. Then Art is born, and finally the Saint concentrates into his work, that is into himself, all that is exquisite in grace and in thought, and in matter combined.

Nothing that Science teaches us is more marvellous than that all the physical forces are so correlated as to be in definite proportions transformable into one another. Mechanical movement, sound, heat, light, electricity, are all manifestations of the same energy. And if one force is chosen as more representative than the others, it is surely the force of light,—which bridges over the stellar species with unknown speed, bringing with it illumination, warmth and life wherever it shines. Hence the whole activity of the material universe may be expressed in terms of either energy or light, and the song of the work of creation is fitly begun with the words “Let there be light.” The supernatural world is parallel. Grace has many forms, all expressible in terms of one another, but most fitly either as spiritual energy or as spiritual light. This is “the light that enlighteneth every man coming into the world..” This is the rising of the Sun of Justice, that causes the path of the just to be as a shining light growing more and more unto the perfect day. The whole of Dante’s *Paradiso*, the loftiest of Christian poems, is a descant on the theme of Light.

The great
symbol of Grace
is Light,

A very interesting phase of Science is the way in which new mysteries are ever being discovered in light.

which reveals all
things and is
itself always being
more and more
revealed.

The spectroscope is opening up the secrets of the universe to a degree which the last generation declared to be inconceivable. Things once thought to be opaque are now found to be perfectly transparent

to newly discovered rays of ordinary invisible light, and probably no nook or corner of the universe is uninfluenced by its all-pervading presence. Everywhere there is perpetual mystery amid continuous revelation. Grace too has its radiation, its reflection, its refraction, its white light in completeness and its variety of colour in dispersal, its absorption, its bright and dark spectrum lines, its invisible waves, its X-rays, and its all-pervadingness. Truly God's Kingdom is a Kingdom of Light.

Thus we may not know what Grace is—do we even know what is that lowest of all organising powers,

*Grace, like
Light,* chemical affinity?—but we know it, like all other forces, from its effects. We study light from the visible world, and we study grace from the possibilities and the actualities of the intellectual and supernatural world. Who can understand gravitation? To all appearance, its effects throughout the universe are absolutely instantaneous. Yet we do not question it because of the mystery. It should be equally absurd to question Grace.

Now, just as under the action of light has been developed the power to see, from the rudimentary sensitiveness of a star-fish to the perfect eye of the eagle,

so under the shining of grace, has been developed that *sensus fidelium*, that apprehension instinctive to sanctity, that "touching, tasting, and handling" of the realities of the other world, which gives to St. Paul his wisdom, to St. Thomas Aquinas his science, to St. Teresa her mystic intelligence, and to many of the Church's veriest children an understanding beyond that of philosophers. One of the most illuminating sayings of the Divine Teacher is, "I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones,"—not that the glory of the supernatural has been levelled downwards, but because the new force dignifies beyond all proportion the lower material. As a single lily of the field is in a higher order of being than the whole of a burnt-out star, so the newest blossom of baptism in Christendom is of a higher rank in immortality and intelligence than a graceless philosopher or scientist.

Again, to force corresponds capacity. Every mineral substance has its own specific heat and light-absorption. Every living thing has its possibility of development, that is, its degree of fulness in the exercise of the forces of life. And the higher the organism, the wider its range of capacity. Hence, to creatures capable of it, Grace has practically no limits. *Modus amandi Deum est supra modum amare*, the measure of loving God is to love Him beyond measure : and when grace is given, it is given "according to the measure of the giving of Christ," which is boundless.

In Nature, it is when force within meets and responds to force without, that life results. Herbert

and is interior
as well as
exterior.

Spencer defines organic life as "the continuous adjustment of internal to external relations." The legs of

a frog after death can be made to kick

by stimulating them with a galvanic battery: it is only when the frog does it by its own internal store of energy, that it is an action of life. So Grace may act on us from without, but it is only when we meet it with grace from within that we are living the life. As St. Bernard says, *Concha esto, non canalis*,—be a reservoir of grace, and not a mere channel. Or, since there are degrees of life, he might have said with physiological reference, Be a ganglion in the nervous system, not simply a fibre,—for fibres only conduct, ganglia originate as well as conduct. A more mechanical simile might be taken from our telegraphic modes of communication. A cable message comes from over the sea far too faintly to write itself down clearly, but quite distinctly enough to actuate a new battery (called a "relay") on this side: the far battery prompts, the relay writes, and the message is known. The metaphor is dreadfully wooden, but it may help to clear thought. If we have within us the relay battery of habitual grace, messages from the other world, inspirations, get themselves written down in our consciousness, whch otherwise would be either unheard or unheeded. And this correspondence of grace within to grace without, is the only life worth living.

Why elaborate this scientific parallel? I may be asked. For the last three hundred years, the physical

sciences have been trying to turn themselves into a philosophy. The sciences themselves steadily advance, but the philosophy illuminates no more than a will-o'-the-wisp. Mean-
while the root principles of Catholic philosophy remain absolutely unshaken. The function and true value of the physical sciences, besides contributing to the forces of material civilisation, will be to minister to the conceptions of Grace. As the utility of the sciences grows, knowledge of them will be more and more in the air : they will take a larger and larger place in education. Through them the visible words of the parable of the universe will be more and more fully known. Grace alone holds the clue to their ultimate meaning. In every parable the words are interesting as well as the meaning, but above all, I love to consider them together.

Thus Science
ministers to
Grace

With the continuous advance of physical science, which undoubtedly is to be the main feature of the world's intellectual life for some time to come, the active and artistic side of man should keep pace. Will it ? In all questions which treat of his material, the artist must feel the keenest interest. Individuals can do without science, but humanity cannot. There will still be poets who will lisp in numbers, for the numbers come : there will still be infant musicians who can tell you nothing of the laws of harmony : there will still be simple unlearned saints who will unconsciously reveal new views of Divine Truth to grateful theologians. But the human mind must follow out the theory. Science holds out the promise of new

rhythms of the universe for poets, new conceptions for artists, new illustrations for thinkers. It is all on the high road of progress, and we cannot hold back. "I proposed in my mind to seek and search out wisely, concerning all things that are done under the sun : this painful occupation hath God given to the children of men, to be exercised therein."

Even so, those who are not scientifically inclined might ask, What is the use to us of looking at things in this way? Must we learn all the Sciences, and dip into all the Arts, in order to be able to appreciate the Christian life? I am and by amplifying the parable of Nature,

far from idolising mere intellectuality, and still further from admitting that the world has any authority to dictate the bent of our minds : but after all, knowledge of science is knowledge of God's work, and the Church has always aimed at the highest degree of knowledge—the fullest development in every upward direction. In the forward swing of scientific investigation, of philosophic speculation, of organised education, of the universalising of culture, the Church cannot afford to lag in the rear. Nor are they true friends of the Church who would wish to hinder any of her children in such progress. And this progress for the Church at large is only to be attained by individuals cultivating their minds to the fullest in the atmosphere of grace, and speaking up to the full height of their attainments. The theory of grace is the highest science, the highest philosophy, the highest art, all in one, and for my part I see no aspect of human learning which does not thence derive its real illumination. I would not wish to

learn chemistry, physics, biology, or any other science, if I did not in these see the footprints of the Incarnation coming nearer and nearer to its manifestation. Since I do see this, I welcome and encourage the progress of scientific education, and I carry out my own theory of writing up to the level of my attainment, even at the risk of wearying or deterring some readers who love not science.

The highest theory does not always produce the highest art,—but where the highest art has been, the mind of man would be unfaithful if it did not follow with the keenest enquiry. Faith and obedience are still the shortest way to real knowledge; nevertheless generation after generation must contribute its *Commentaries on Sentences* till some saintly genius concentrates the gathering rays into a *Summa Theologica*. It is for us all to lift ourselves to our highest level of expression and of appreciation to hasten the coming of our representative Poet-Philosopher - Scientist - Saint. The *Summa* of the thirteenth century became possible, because thousands in the century before, who might have been content with ignorance and pleasure-seeking and money-making, denied themselves and lived hard lives in the enthusiastic pursuit of vaguely appreciated Ideal Truth.

which still awaits
its highest
interpretation.

CHAPTER VII.

THE IMPLEMENT OF THE ART,—PRAYER.

Sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts.—I. Peter iii., 15

THERE is no direct way of producing any work of Art by the mere exercise of the will. Any act of creation is beyond the powers of human nature. In every art we have to work from pre-existing material and by the use of instruments. In our analysis of the Art of Life, we have already studied all the pre-existing materials, and we come now to the consideration of the instrument or implement which has to be used. This is no other than Prayer.

**Prayer, the
instrument,**

The want of the rightful use of this implement was the cause of the partial failure in all those schools which we generally call Pagan. It might seem strange to call Prayer an absolute necessity when we remember, for example, the very small part which Prayer played in the life of such an artist as Socrates. It is true he sacrificed to Æsculapius and professed a general devotion to his country's gods ; but this form of religion he evidently held to have a very superficial relation to what he considered the great work of life,

namely, the pursuit of virtue. Buddha again, a still higher artist than Socrates, professed to believe in no God at all, and the kind of prayer which consists in petition he thought unworthy of the moral dignity of a philosopher. Nevertheless for Socrates there was something above his country's gods, an ideal Infinite vaguely apprehended, towards which he tended by mental self-elevation and into which he absorbed himself by prolonged contemplation. Buddha denied in words the existence of God, but the one great all-controlling thought of his life was that of a perfect, infinitely holy, self-subsisting Moral Law, and this Law to him was God, and the greater part of his days was spent in rapt contemplation of this Law. As we shall see, contemplation is the larger part of prayer, and it was to this that Socrates, Buddha, or any other moral artist has owed all the success to which he has attained. Therefore, we have a right to say that Prayer is the essentially necessary implement of the Art of Life, and apart from Prayer all attempts in this direction are foredoomed to failure.

Only, in saying this, we must take large and philosophical views of what Prayer really is. I do not know anything more pitiable in the whole history of ^{not a mere asking} ~~for things,~~ thought, than the test by which Tyndall, the model man of Science, and the typical advanced thinker of his day, proposed to gauge the effective value of Prayer. His idea was to set a large number of people praying for objects so definitely marked out as to preclude the working of chance, and then, after waiting for results, to take the scientific

percentage and to judge of religion thereby. When we have unfolded the true concept of Prayer, we shall not need another word to show the ridiculous ineptitude of Tyndall's challenge. Indeed, the only thing it seems to measure is the value of that advanced thought of which Tyndall was so doughty a champion.

Let me premise that in discoursing on Prayer, I take the attitude, not of an instructor, but only of an appreciative critic in the Art.

*but, as we learn
from the best
teachers,* No one would go to Ruskin to learn how to build a palace, or even a cottage; yet, even painters and

architects find in Ruskin a stimulus to their thought and imagination over and above what their own practical knowledge would suggest. It is always wholesome to look at our ideals from some other point of view than the merely practical. One sentence of St. Alphonsus, or St. Ignatius, or St. Teresa, would give more practical help to the humble worker in Prayer than anything I could write; and if anything in my pages should prove helpful as well as suggestive, it may be taken as certain that I have adopted it bodily from one of the recognised authorities. For instance, I have no practical knowledge of architecture, but some time ago I gave a lecture on the subject from the aesthetic and appreciative point of view. One of the leading architects in the town was present and came up after the lecture to tell me that he wished that all his brother-architects had been there also. Every artist in proportion to his intelligence loves to hear his ideals discussed; and it is in this spirit only that I venture to write on Prayer. For real instruction

in the matter we all have to go to those who are qualified as teachers by sanctity and experience.

I find a good definition of prayer in *Sancta Sophia*, the best book of instruction in piety written in English for English-speaking readers.

The author is the Ven. Father Augustin Baker, O.S.B., and his merit is that he combines the ancient traditions of St. Benedict with the modern methods of St. Ignatius. "Prayer," he says, "is an affectuous actuation of an intellective soul towards God, expressing, or at least implying, an entire dependence on Him as the Author and Fountain of all good, a will and readiness to give Him His due, which is no less than all love, obedience, adoration, glory, and worship, by humbling and annihilating of herself and all creatures in His presence; and lastly, a desire and intention to aspire to an union of spirit with Him." With such a definition it is evident that the part of prayer which consists in asking for the satisfaction of our temporal needs is merely a ripple on the surface, or a wavelet on the shore. It has so little to do with real progress in the Art of Life, that we shall say no more about it. The Saints did not become Saints by trying to get their desires fulfilled : they got their desires fulfilled because they were Saints.

What we have now to do is to take this concept of prayer and enquire into the qualities which so distinguish it from all other human acts as to constitute it the only implement of the Art of Life. There is in it, first of all, the upward attitude, that "sense

a complexus of
acts lifting the
soul towards
God,

giving it its erect
attitude,

of uplift and outlook" which Professor James speaks of as characterising the whole intellectual life, but which in reality is almost peculiar to prayer. In every art excellence is attained in proportion as the artist can forget self and merge himself in his ideal. Even when a poet introduces himself into his own work, as Dante did, it is his idealised self, and not his real, that he introduces. Almost every energy of soul, other than prayer, includes a pushing forward of self which is at variance with the utter impersonality of Art. One of the Saints, St. Catherine of Siena, I think, quaintly observes that the very physical form of the human heart indicates its destiny,—expanded to its fullest breadth above and narrowed to a point below. That is the spiritual shape which prayer gives to the soul of man.

The natural consequence of this is a greater possibility of illumination from everything that is above, and illumination is the very flooding it with soul of Art. Poets, painters, thinkers, light, attribute their very best results to a sort of inspiration. The thought, or the picture, or the fancy flashes into their mind from the unknown and is received by them with reverence as coming from somewhere above themselves. Yet, these Art-thoughts come only to artists, and come to them only because their souls are open in that direction. The habit of prayer, therefore, keeps the soul steadily in that one position wherein it can make the most of that Light which enlighteneth every man coming into this world.

We have already seen that this Light is not only the type, but the very substance of the grace

which is the form and the power of the Art of Life. Prayer, therefore, has its efficacy, because it is of its own nature constantly receptive of that grace. It is the ideal exercise of all the virtues, and in all Art it is the idea that dominates. The idea has still to be realised, but its spiritual existence beforehand is always the necessary preliminary. Michael Angelo saw the beautiful form imprisoned in the marble ; he had projected it thither from his own mind, and after that all he had to do was to liberate it. So in our morning prayer we have a vision of perfect beauty imprisoned in the rough-hewn material of our earthly life, and in proportion as we see, we strive to liberate it.

A fourth quality of Prayer is that anticipation of perfection in which every artist indulges. In his plain common sense he knows he has always fallen short of it, and his understanding will frankly admit that his next endeavour will fall short again, but his artist-dream holds no such creed, and he works in the unattainable but irrepressible hope that somehow he will body forth the very perfection of his ideal before the eyes of an unthinking world. This is the secret of the artist's joy and exaltation while he works, and the measure of his disappointment when his work is over. This exaltation and this disappointment are both parts of prayer. We set out to do on earth what the angels and saints are doing in heaven, and the dross of earth still spoils all our efforts. None the less we begin again, as the painter and the sculptor do, and somehow

or other we contribute towards keeping alive the great ideal in the world. If we did not anticipate absolute perfection, we should not attain even to the height of partial failure.

A fifth quality of Prayer is that it is a continual appeal for instruction. The greater the artist, the

*It is an appeal
for instruction.* more ready he always is to learn. He does not mind where his instruction comes from, provided he gets

it. Shakespeare took hints from the humblest historian of facts. Turner was a lowly disciple of Nature as long as he lived. It is the only attitude that makes progress possible.

A sixth quality is, that by self-examination, combined with contemplation, we are continually instituting that comparison with the

*and a comparison
with the copy.* copy which is the only safeguard of Truth in Art. Our great Model has been embodied in myriad forms,

and every one of those forms gives us an opportunity for such comparison. In prayer these forms glide before our mental vision like a sacred procession, and every one of them is a stimulus and a rebuke. Even the hermits in the desert, who had vowed themselves to solitude, used from time to time to visit one another that in their humility they might learn new forms of virtue by comparison.

The last quality of Prayer to which we shall advert, is the social side of it. All prayer instinctively

*and a bond of
union.* tends to become intercession, and this instinct is truly artistic. No artist stands alone. If a Dante

writes an epic, he arranges all his thoughts in harmony

with some Homer or Virgil. If a Tennyson writes an In Memoriam, he saturates his mind with all the sorrows that all other elegiac poets have sung. Painters and thinkers live and work in schools, and a large part of every artist's joy is the unselfish thought that his work is not all his own. Therefore, when the disciples asked the great Teacher, "Lord, teach us how to pray," the answer was the social prayer, "*Our Father.*"

No wonder then that our instruction is that men ought always to pray, and never to cease. The artist's implement must be ever in hand or at hand. The painter always has his pencil ready, if it were only for a thumb-nail sketch, and indeed, he would be a poor artist who gave only stated parts of his life to his work. All Nature continually sings to the musician, rhymes to the poet, illustrates the thoughts of the thinker, and evokes the prayers of the saint. Every artist then, seeing that he is an artist always, is perpetually exercising that mental attitude of idealism, of aloofness, of watching for hints, of reliance on help, which in our Art is the attitude of Prayer. Any one aiming at the Art of Life without seriously striving after the "Pray without ceasing," is only an amateur, and cannot expect to reach to more than the crude judgment and unsatisfactory attainment of the amateur.

Therefore the
use of it is
necessary.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT.

The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.
I. Cor. xiv, 32.

ALL the Arts have common ground in this, that they tend to produce peculiar sets of characteristics in their votaries. When these characteristics are not counter-balanced by a proportional share of what is rightly called common sense, they inevitably result in what the world at large calls eccentricity. Everybody is familiar with the recklessness of philosophers, the dreamy and unpractical ways of poets, the irritability of musicians, the Bohemianism of painters, and the unconventionality of actors. It could not be otherwise. When energies are strongly concentrated in one direction, it is difficult for human nature to reserve a residue for general distribution. Moreover, the very fact that one is an artist indicates that the sensibilities are abnormally developed ; the nerves, as people say, are highly strung, and the whole character becomes impressionable and excitable.

Thus the life of Art tends always to produce some form of what George Eliot called "other-worldliness."

She invented the nickname as an answer to the religious reproach contained in the word "worldliness." But, indeed, every

art creates a spiritual region for itself : everything else to it is worldly, and its own region is other-worldly. George Eliot had a good deal of this quality herself, and it would have been well for her if she could have recognised the pursuit of virtue as an art and had not so exclusively regarded it as a science. The whole world is made more musical because its musicians are other-worldly towards harmony ; and in the same way the whole world becomes more virtuous because saints are other-worldly towards virtue.

Almost any high passion will cause a state of mind similar to the intense exaltation of Art, or perhaps it would be better to say that both Art and the higher passions have the power to raise the affections into a keen state of activity ; only Art does it for life, while the passions do it only during their continuance. That is why artists and lovers have this in common, that their happiness is exalted and their misery extreme. The outside world, which does not really sympathise either with Art or with Love, makes fun of the happiness and thinks the misery folly. Nevertheless, such happiness and such misery are the light and shade of life's great realities. It is because in a saint all the highest passions are at the maximum along with the most energetic devotion to the highest art, that this light and shade is so pronounced in this life. A single little thought about spiritual things, which to the eye of the world may be microscopic, suffices to send him into an ecstasy of delight ; and a single flaw, which to the world may seem quite trivial, or even preferable, plunges him into depths of wretchedness beyond the

and glorifies its
own pleasures
and pains,

capacity and far beyond the understanding of the average man. It is the artist's joy and sorrow in the *poco piu* and the *poco meno*, which Browning has so happily described in the lines :

Oh, the little more, and how much it is !
And the little less, and what worlds away !

It has been equally well described for the lover by Coventry Patmore :

For ever is the gain or loss
Which maddens him with hope or fear :
So trifles serve for his relief,
And trifles make him sick and pale ;
And yet his pleasure and his grief
Are both on a majestic scale.
The chance, indefinitely small,
Of issue infinitely great,
Eclipses finite interests all,
And has the dignity of fate.

The amplitude of the swing of this pendulum of emotion makes it very difficult for artists, lovers and saints to preserve the ordinary balance in the narrow path of life. ^{sometimes beyond the point of balance.} Shakespeare links together "the lunatic, the lover and the poet," and the first impression the world generally has of a saint is that he is a trifle mad. Since the world thought it of the Great Artist, the model of all sanctity, His followers need not be disturbed at the judgment. That which is never tempted to exceed must be entirely of the common-place. St. Paul,

who was well experienced in all the magnificence of excess, and who at the same time had his heart sweetly tuned to all the common interests of humanity, expressed it for us all in his own forcible way, *Sive mente excedimus, Deo ; sive sobrii sumus, vobis* : "For whether we be transported in mind, it is to God ; or whether we be more moderate, it is for you ; for the charity of Christ presseth us."

Many, and these amongst the highest, have so strong a regulative faculty that they are able entirely to subdue this tendency to excess or eccentricity. Shakespeare buried his magician's wand and closed his days as a country gentleman with a keen eye to deeds and mortgages. Dante was as superb a politician as he was a poet. Michael Angelo balanced one art against another, and was with equal ease by turns sculptor, painter, architect and poet. And the two highest of merely human saints, Mary and Joseph, revealed nothing extraordinary in their lives at all. But, as a rule, the burden of a great idea can hardly be borne through a material world without some tottering, and when the great idea is attempted by a small soul, it is no wonder if the tottering becomes very evident, or even results in an occasional fall. Such falls, however mortifying in themselves, and however ridiculous they may appear to the world, are nevertheless the delight of the teacher in Art. When his pupils so fall, he knows they are progressing. Those who never attempt anything beyond their strength, will never attain to any excellence. Those who aim at the Art of Life, can never hope to find the world sympathetic, but

But this should
not make the
world scoff, nor
the disciple
despair.

there is no reason why they should not seek consolation in their failures.

A striking illustration of this line of thought is often found in those who become converts to the Catholic

Yet converts or
new disciples
should not
exaggerate,

Church late in life. Their habits of thought and action are already formed. They have a tendency to give undue prominence to things

which are new to them. Their own conversion is so great an event to them that they are inclined to impress it somewhat obtrusively upon the notice of others. They thus tend to a special form of eccentricity which marks them off in a most undesirable way from those who are born to the heritage of the Faith. The wise convert summons up all his regulative faculty and endeavours completely to merge himself in the average flow of Catholic life.

So commonly do eccentricities beset the path of Art that there are many foolish persons who actually

nor should any
one ape, such want
of balance.

imitate them in the hope of being mistaken for artists. Many a poetaster has endeavoured to make up for the feebleness of his rhymes by

letting his hair grow long and cultivating a weird look in his eye. And in the same foolish way there are some who aim at an external appearance of absorption, and let the world know that they have curious times for prayer, in the hope that pious people may take them for saints. Fortunately these amiable forms of hypocrisy can do no great harm in the world, for true art is always tested by the first touch of reality. We all know how St. Philip Neri unmasked the nun who set up for exalted sanctity,

by asking her on his arrival at the Convent to pull off his muddy boots. She drew herself up in disdain at his courtesy, and he went straight back to the Pope to say that there was not humility enough there to build sanctity upon. What these people ape, and what the world sees, are not the real Art itself, but only its re-actions upon an uncongenial environment.

One form of eccentricity which frequently comes to small souls, and sometimes clings like a burr to great souls also, is that abnormal development of conscientiousness which becomes scrupulosity. This, in some of its manifestations, seems, to one who is free from it, such utter foolishness, that there is the temptation to feel surprised at the tenderness and sympathy with which the subject is treated by masters in the spiritual life. The surprise vanishes when we remember that scruples are only the want of balance, sometimes inevitable, sometimes transitory, which tends to beset earnest effort in the Art. In such a matter, judgment should come from above and not from below; and the indifference to which a scruple is impossible, is of a distinctly lower grade than the effort to which scruples may be incident.

If then, a soul finds itself liable to unexplained ups and downs in the spiritual life; if on rare occasions it experiences a sudden and unaccountable glorifying of familiar truths; if it feels itself inclined, like the poet and his theme, to be a "scorner of the ground;" if enthusiasm is congenial and indifference irksome; if failure is keenly felt; if

Scrupulosity, a frequent defect in the temperament,

but the temperament itself desirable.

the mental horizon is often over-clouded with the storms of anxiety—let that soul take heart and courage: it has been endowed by God with a temperament to which much progress is possible in the Art of Life.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW TO LEARN THE ART.

*If there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline,
think on these things.—Phil. iv., 8.*

THE parallelism between the Art of Life and all other Arts leads to a very important practical conclusion, namely, that this, like all the others, can be taught, and has to be learned. Stated in words, this looks like a truism. Nevertheless, practical belief in it is rare, and continuous obedience to it is one of the greatest difficulties of the human mind. Just as plants continually tend to revert to their wild way of growing, in spite of all the cultivation they receive, so humanity tends to reject that process of culture which necessarily comes from above, and endeavours to substitute, first in practice and afterwards in theory, its own spontaneous way of growing from within. Socrates spent the whole of a long life of philosophic teaching in the almost fruitless endeavour to impress this truth upon the Athenians, but his teaching stands for all time, and it is just as necessary now as then. "If," he used to

All arts want learning,

say, "you want your boy to be a shoemaker, or as sculptor, you know exactly what to do with him. You send him to be an apprentice. You make him practise his trade or his art, until he becomes proficient, and then, and then only, do you allow him to call himself a shoemaker or a sculptor. But if you want him to learn the far higher art of virtue, you either send him to a mere sophist who only talks, or else you leave him to acquire it as you foolishly fancy you yourself have acquired it, by instinct." Another time he said : " Suppose the town-crier were to say in the theatre, ' Stand up all carpenters,' only those who have really learned to be carpenters would venture to stand. But if the crier said : ' Stand up all men of sense,' the whole theatre would rise in a body, although we all know that men of sense are even rarer than carpenters." It was while he was saying this that one of the sophists, having just returned to Athens after an absence of several years, jeered at him and said : " What, Socrates, are you still saying the same old things ? " " Not only the same old things," replied Socrates; " but in the same old words. If I had asked you ten years ago how to spell Socrates, you would have spelt it in eight letters. And if I ask you again to-day, you will, I am sure, spell it in the same old eight letters." What Socrates began, the Greek schools of philosophers tried to continue for the few, and the Catholic Church has endeavoured to impress upon the many ; but to this present day the man in the street still believes that he has every right to judge of all moral questions without any moral preparation, and the world at large is still the great sophist, jeering at the perpetual enunciation of this necessary truth.

The fact that virtue is the complex result of prolonged cultivation and severe self-discipline has been much obscured for modern times by the theory of Protestantism that justification is by faith only and that whatever good works are required and appropriate will spring spontaneously from that faith. There is of course in this the fundamental fallacy of ignoring that faith itself is a good work and that it is just as likely to spring from other good works, as other good works from it. But we are not dealing now in controversy. I only say that the old notion so manfully combated by Socrates, is, where Protestantism and Rationalism prevail, now commoner than ever, and for the purposes of the Art of Life, the whole struggle has to be gone through over again. At this day the dominant theory of education in these countries is what they call the undenominational, and we cannot get our opponents even to see that what we are contending for is the possibility and the liberty of cultivating the Art of Life. How Socrates would laugh at our folly if he heard people say that the Christian religion, which includes all his philosophy and a great deal more, which aims at no less than a life-long training of a frail body and an imperfect soul into a form of glorious perfection, that this Christian religion can be sufficiently taught by one day's formal devotion every week and one hour of catechetical instruction ! Truly ours deserves to be called a prosaic age ! If it were not for the continued effort of the Catholic Church, all the arts would have died out of the world—architecture, music, poetry, thinking, and the Art of Life.

We will start, then, with the axiom that for every individual it is necessary to learn the art. No matter what his original endowment may be, no matter how highly gifted with the artistic temperament, he must go through the process of discipline for this art, as for every other. Genius has been called an infinite capacity for taking pains, and the pains have to be rightly directed. The artistic temperament is valuable only because it gives the enthusiasm which makes drudgery lovable. The baby Mozart was a musician from his cradle, and it only made him submit to a severer discipline in consequence. The baby Aloysius Gonzaga was a saint in the nursery, and it showed itself in a passion for discipline unsurpassed in the annals of youth.

If I want to become a musician, I put myself into the hands of a teacher. I do what he tells me. Besides learning a lot of things which I can understand, I practise for hours and hours at exercises whose bearing has not yet been revealed to me. If, after a while, my power develops, I go to some Academy where music is in the very atmosphere. Having now some little power of my own, I add a touch from one master and a hint from another. I compare style with style. I bring my judgment into collision with people who know better than I, and after years of such training I bow deeper than ever before the geniuses of the world and say that I am still a disciple. Of course there are people who, because they have an ear that can distinguish *do re mi fa*, and a voice that can warble it without obvious defect, will, at their very first lesson, expect to try

their powers on the songs of a Santley or a Patti, and at the tenth lesson will call themselves musicians. Of these the true artist thinks only with scorn. When young Raphael, with all his genius, wanted to become a painter, he went to the studio of Perugino, and there lovingly wrought himself into his master's manner until at last the two could paint together into the same picture, the two styles blending into perfect harmony of result. Later on his style developed into other forms, but he never lost the grace and the power of the first. In just such a way must we learn the Art of Life. There must be the same joy in being a disciple, not a vague submission merely to books or spiritual influences, but a definite determination to learn what actual living people, with all their imperfections, can teach us. There is a drudgery to go through. There will be tasks given us to perform, of which we shall not always see the full bearing. We must model ourselves upon a given style. We must learn to suspend our judgment, because the power of judgment is a consequence, and not a preliminary, of excellence.

The Sacrament of Penance is part of the Church's practice, first and foremost, of course, because our

*Practical sub-
mission necessary,* Lord instituted it for the forgiveness of sins, as we read plainly in the Gospels. But the gifts of God are wide-reaching in their influences, and for our purpose now the Sacrament of Penance is the means whereby the Church offers, to every one of her children, the opportunity of personal and practical instruction in the Art of Life. Every student in every art reveals himself, blunders and all, or indeed blunders

especially, to his master. It has often happened that the pupil has higher genius than the master ; still if he has humility he can learn. What he does badly he would not reveal to the world, and of what he does reveal the flattering world will not tell him the truth. But it is a wholesome discipline to subject errors to be chidden and corrected, and even in his best efforts a kindly criticism with an eye to the ideal, even in one who could not do so well himself, will check the inflation of pride and point out paths of improvement. All those who try to progress in the spiritual life make this use of the Sacrament of Penance. This is why priests are taught to be directors as well as confessors, and this is why the faithful are encouraged to seek direction as well as absolution.

As in other arts, pupils who begin to find their feet are no longer satisfied with isolated tutors, but gravitate to one or other of the schools where they know they shall imbibe ~~and social effort,~~ instruction from the atmosphere around them, and where they shall be buoyed up by the sympathy and emulation of their fellow-pupils, so precisely with the Art of Life. The highest part of the story of Christianity has been the gathering together of ardent souls into communities devoted to this great pursuit. Other things they may have done as well. In the midst of a turbulent world, all the other arts took refuge with them, and this last fact is their main justification in the eyes of a world which is no longer so turbulent, but which is still just as unbelieving. But in the eyes of eternal truth their cherishing of literature, poetry, painting and music is only a minor jewel in their crown. Their real claim

to glory is that they upheld the practical traditions of the pursuit of perfection. They failed here and there, as all things human will fail, but the effort was unintermitting and every generation has seen it renewed in fresh forms. Every religious house is a school where the art of virtue is practically taught and continually exercised.

It is a true instinct in Catholics, and we see here the reason of it, to prefer always to entrust their children to the religious orders

**and these are
best found in
the religious
life.**

for education. The solitary secular teacher may be the most excellent person in the world, but what practical guarantee have we of his or

her professional training in that art which it is most important to teach? If we want our boys to learn Latin and Greek, we feel a special satisfaction in noting the academical degree of their teachers. A degree does not mean everything, but it gives a larger probability of due qualification. It is also true that not all religious are in their own person models of those virtues which they are supposed to teach; but the chances are in their favour, because they have passed through a special process of culture towards this end.

The study of the Art thus begun, whether it be afterwards continued in the inner circle of the Church or

not, is, of course, the work of a life-
Continuous practice, time. The energy of the pursuit of it depends upon the enthusiasm of the

individual, but the secrets of success in it are the same as in any other art. A *prima donna* must practise her vocal exercises as long as she sings in public. If ever she intermits, the flexibility of the voice suffers. For

the ordinary arts, a few hours a day of practice amply suffice, but with the Art of Life the time of practice is all our waking hours. Indeed, as we saw at the beginning, even the hours of sleep are pressed into the service.

The principal part of this practice, as we have seen, is to acquire facility in the use of the implement of prayer. Not even the Great Master Himself, who, being divine, might have wrought the work of the Art by miracle, would dispense Himself from this practice, but after His day of labour used to go to the mountain-top to pray.

An essential part of the process, the larger part to many of us, is the detection of error and the punishment of failure. Countless difficulties arise from the imperfection of the material upon which we operate, namely, our own soul. Our mingled being is, as the French say, *chétive* by nature, that is, it is always tending to fall away from any state of permanence, and therefore perseverance is the greatest difficulty in the spiritual life. This downward tendency is greatly aggravated by inherited imperfections, and still more have we added to it by sins of our own. The necessary practice to counteract this tendency is that of mortification, the nature of which we have already sufficiently studied. Every cultivating process, whether it be for a vine, for a poet, or for a saint, implies the constant use of the pruning-knife, especially when that cultivating process has to be remedial as well. St. Augustine cries to God, *Hic ure, hic seca, hic non parcas, ut in eternum parcas*—“Here below

with the
art-implement.

The need of
correction

burn, amputate, and spare not, that for eternity Thou may'st spare," and in these operations, as in the whole of the Art, we are fellow workers with God. "Beauty," says Father Faber, "is the daughter of mortification, and so only is she legitimately born."

The obstacles that impede our way from without necessitate another form of practice which our Lord

**and of watchful-
ness.** habitually associated with prayer, namely, watchfulness. "Watch and

pray, that you enter not into temptation." So many obstacles in the world are insuperable to our frailty that we require to have a delicate instinct to know what to avoid. Every art has its impossibilities, and it is only bunglers that attempt them. Moreover, besides these inherent impossibilities, we have to encounter active opposition. The builders of the walls of Jerusalem had not so much to contend with as we have, face to face with those whose interest or desire it is that we should not succeed. It is no wonder that in the little prayer which epitomises the work of life our Lord put the petition—"Lead us not into temptation." He Himself, whom we have just contemplated as the Model of prayer, was also our Model of watchfulness. With what fiery energy He turned upon His chosen disciple with "Get thee behind me, Satan," when that disciple placed a tempting thought in His way!

The training which the Apostles received is the model of that which we must ever desire. How

**The Divine
Teacher** imperious and uncompromising were our Lord's demands in His vocation !

"Sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come, follow Me ;" "Let the dead

bury their dead : " If a man hate not everything in this world he is not worthy to be my disciple." How absolutely unattainable was the ideal He always held before their eyes ! " Be ye perfect as my Heavenly Father is perfect." And yet how gentle and forbearing He was with all the ignorances and imperfections of human frailty, from the loving " Have I been so long time with you, Philip ? " down to the divinely compassionate " Neither do I condemn thee." At the same time how severe a judge He was, not of the individual, but of the work of the Art—for example in His contrasts between " What was said by them of old," and " What I say unto you." No other teacher taught as He taught, because the whole of His life, and the whole power of His divinity, entered into and shone through His words. The sinner has to think of Him as the Redeemer here and the Judge hereafter. But saints find all their motive in the perpetual contemplation of the exquisite beauty of His own interior work. He is to them " the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely."

This was the only art He practised. All others were in His power and at His choice ; but He painted not, He sang not, He put forth no scheme of philosophy. He only lived ^{practised no other art,} and died. And what He chose for Himself is the only thing He demands from all of us. We *may* follow any other art we please, but we *must* follow this. And herein He shows His predilection for our race that he asks of us only the highest. All others we may put aside, but this is the very reason of our existence.

Yet it was not out of contempt that He passed

by the other refinements of life, for He despised nothing human. He well knew that all the other arts would instinctively recognise His supremacy over them ; and like the Wise Men of the East, they all come flocking to His cradle, or to His cross, bringing their choicest gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all things after me." As the triumphal procession of His own beauty passes through the obscurity of this world, and ascends to His glory on high, He drags all the other arts with Him as captives at His chariot wheels. Even His external life was continually breaking out into unconscious beauty. If men rejected Him, it was to give to painters of all ages the Crib of Bethlehem. If they scorned and degraded Him, it was to picture the *Ecce Homo*. Architects have built for Him, poets make Him their highest theme, and no music in the world so sweetly haunts our ears as that which breathes of Him.

The great School He left behind Him nobly entered into His spirit. "Out of *Sion* hath shone the loveliness of His beauty." (Ps. 49. 2.) It has provided the world with millions of saints, every one of whom was on an indefinitely higher moral level than the greatest of Pagan philosophers. It has flooded the world with an art literature unparalleled by any other. Whole libraries have been written on prayer, on grace, on the ascetic life, on mysticism, and on all the subjects which we have been meditating upon throughout these chapters. Even in the darkest times it kept a healing hand on the pulse of humanity. It has never

and in His
school.

concealed, never altered, never minimised, never compromised any of the teachings of the art. It has never lowered the ideal. It has never been harsh to the individual. It has never been other than strenuous in its judgment of error. All the advantages, all the privileges, all the honours of the Art of Life are, in the Catholic Church, open to every individual soul. Truly in Her the Word of the Lord has free course and is glorified.

It is in this School that it is our privilege to be studying. Every art, besides its principles and its practice, has certain tricks or dodges by which technical skill is economised and improved. The knowledge of such contrivances increases with every generation. The architect's apprentice now starts with a groundwork of science far beyond the ken of the builders of Notre Dame. So, in the same way, a St. Ignatius has taught us secrets of prayer unthought of by the Fathers of the Desert, and the Church herself has developed modes of exterior worship growing in complexity side by side with the intricacy of human life. All these technicalities, of course, every artist learns. We cannot afford to ignore what our fellow-workers have done and are doing. Nevertheless the real work of the Art does not depend on these technicalities. With all our architectural knowledge we cannot build another Durham Cathedral. With all our refinement of musical technique, it is a question whether we shall ever surpass Beethoven. With all our instruction on prayer, we shall be happy if we pray like one of the hermits of old. It is the zeal, the fire, the enthusiasm from within acting in

We, His pupils,
must do all we
can,

respondent harmony with the grace from above that produces the effect at any stage of the Art's development.

For most of us there is no operation in the Art more continuously necessary than correction of error. Every sin is a blotch of ugliness on our work and therefore has to be rubbed out, each sin separately. It is a process of which we must be neither weary, nor ashamed. The blot is there, and nothing can make it artistic. It must go. The great Master knows that the rubbing out of imperfections is just as essential as the positive work of the Art, and if He sees us at it when He passes by, we shall have a smile of approval for our diligence all the same. But the work must be gently done. There is no need of violence, otherwise we may spoil the material as well as remove the blot, and spoiled material is worse than a blot. A rubbed-out sin is often an excellent basis for fresh beauty of colour. St. Peter's sin repented of added a touch of sweet pathos to all the rest of his life, and Mary Magdalen stands second among women because of her *forgiven* love.

And now, gentle readers who have followed me thus far, the time has come for us, on this subject, to part company. We are all (or else you would not have been reading) disciples of this Art, and of this School, which I have been trying to describe to you. Let us therefore get to work, and not be idle. "Work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work." We are agreed that all our Art efforts hitherto have been a sad bungle. We see the beauty of the ideal afar

and mutual
help.

company. We are all (or else you would not have been reading) disciples of this Art, and of this School, which

off and are unhappy because our attempts to reproduce it are such a failure. Let us then lend one another a hand, my fellow-pupils, and help one another with an occasional touch of the wonder-working tool of prayer, that when at the end the great Master comes to examine our workmanship, it may not be utterly condemned.

IN OMNIBUS GLORIFICETUR DEUS.

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